

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting March 14, 2013

FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Susan Stompe, Larry Minikes, Ernie Stanton, Robert Eichstaedt, Jill Templeton, Delos Putz, Ann Thomas, Arlin Weinberger, John Natt, Mike Swezy (MMWD), and Elise Holland (Marin County Parks).

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: March – MCL Walk into Conservation History at Olompali State Historic Park, March 23, 9:30 – 1:00; County Parks Commission meeting – March 21, 3:00 – 5:00; April – Friends of China Camp Public Forum, April 2, 6:30 – 8:30, San Rafael Corporate Center, SR; Mt. Tam State Park Earth Day projects, April 13, East Peak; MCL Annual Dinner, with Jared Huffman, April 19, 5:30 – 9:00; EAC of West Marin, Annual Birding and Nature Festival, various venues, April 26 – 28. May – State Parks Trails and Greenways conference, May 8 – 10, Granlibakken conference Center, Tahoe City; Bay Area Open Space Council Annual conference, May 16, 8:30 – 4:30, Presidio, San Francisco
Add to Agenda: State Department of Fire and Forestry (CalFire), Draft Vegetation Treatment Program EIR (Draft VTPEIR), Comment extended to April 8 (Note: Agenda rearranged to accommodate report from Elise Holland, Marin County Parks)

MINUTES for February 14, 2012 – Approved

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) Marin County Parks:

- a. Marin County Parks Commission: Commissioner Greg Zitney announced that the Commission will consider the naming of the new Tennessee-Manzanita Pathway after Charles McGlashan at their next meeting on March 21; they will also take up the matter of non-conforming use policies. All other reports are from Elise Holland, Chief of Planning and Resources.
- b. Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee: The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution on February 26 designating the committee composition to consist of two commissioners, one representative of the agricultural community, and four at-large members with working knowledge of finance, public lands management, and related experience. The commission members will have one-year terms, and the others will have two-year terms.
- c. Roads and Trails Management Plan: About 170 comments were received on the Preliminary Draft RTMP. They are being reviewed and the Draft is being substantially revised. The Draft Plan should be out end of April; Draft EIR is being done concurrently. The “model” for considering proposals (for road or trail work) calls for main analysis and evaluation to be done by staff, who will “work” the proposals using detailed criteria and decision model in the RTMP.

They will go to Commission for review. Question: “Will the public be noticed when projects are reviewed?” – Ans: Yes, public will be informed of proposed actions, since a change in use is a “project” in CEQA terms. However, EIR will serve as programmatic environmental document. Question: “ How will the list of desired projects submitted by MCBC (last year) be considered?” Ans: It is likely that staff will announce an “open time” to solicit proposed projects, then conduct a thorough analysis of environmental conditions, context, connections, design, cost, and other issues – e.g., which would be the “best” route to get from point A to point B? Comment: “To make a connection (for bikes or horses), it’s okay to go on pavement – not all connection have to be dirt connections.” Ans: All factors will be considered in evaluating proposals.

- d. Blithedale Ridge Fuel Break A recent problem arose when a fuel break was cut wider than apparently had been authorized – 60-feet in width. The Parks Department determined in 2009 that no more fuel breaks should be cut on Open space Preserve lands until the Vegetation Management Plan and EIR are completed. However, there are different interpretations of “maintenance” of fuel breaks. Parks is *maintaining* existing fuel breaks but is not cutting new fuel breaks. In this regard, the Draft Vegetation Management Plan is done, and the Notice of Preparation for the EIR will be scheduled (soon?).
- e. Parks Department signage contract: Elise explained that signage on OSP lands needs complete overhaul: 20 different logos and/or design currently exist on OSP lands. Many are missing, and where present are inconsistent, unclear in directions, etc. A contract has been let to a consultant to do a comprehensive redesign.

2) State Parks:

- a. Meeting with new State Parks Director, Maj. Gen’l (ret) Anthony Jackson: The Friends of China Camp hosted an informal greeting for the new director of State Parks at China Camp Village on March 8. “Tony” Jackson talked individually with many attendees and spoke to the group about how he had been persuaded to come out of his new retirement to take on the job. (Mention of his wife’s interest and involvement in California native plants, which helped to prompt his interest.) He will be visiting all parks in the State system. He is committed to turning around the somewhat tarnished image of the Department, and also helping to chart new course for long term viability of State Parks that is innovative, explores revenue generation models, and makes use of partnerships between Parks and non-profit partners. He also announced that Ernest Chung, President of FOCC, will be serving on the State Parks and Recreation Commission.
- b. Statewide Final Program EIR for Change-in-Use of Roads and Trails: The Department received 800 comments on the Draft PEIR, and expects to release the Final in late April.
- c. Change of name of Mt. Tam Interpretive Association to Friends of Mt. Tam: Arlin Weinberger, long active in “MTIA,” described the reasons for changing the name of the organization that leads hikes, volunteers at the visitor center at East Peak, manages the Gravity Car Barn, and generally supports Mt. Tamalpais State Park’s interpretive activities. The former name was cumbersome and easily forgotten. One objective is to attract more volunteers. The organization is not

a member of Marin State Parks Association. It was established in 19?? as the cooperating association of Mt. Tam State Park.

- d. Tamalpais Conservation Club's "Mt. TamJam" is on schedule for June 22: Larry Minikes announced that plans are going forward for this event, which will raise funds for Mt. Tam State Park ranger services. Production costs are considerable (!); they are expecting up to 3,500 to attend. Yellow buses will be used for transportation.

- 3) MMWD "Friends of Mt. Tam Watershed": Mike Swezy, Manager of the MMWD Watershed Division, outlined the history of the District's long-standing desire to develop a non-profit "friends of the watershed" organization. The idea has gone through several permutations. Three years ago the District hired a consultant to develop a business plan for a 501(c)(3). After considerable public discussion and approval from the Board, the District convened a group to consider various options for such an organization. As a consequence of their deliberations over the past year, the District is now looking at the possibility of a broad collaboration among the various land management agencies and corresponding non-profit associations like the Golden Gate Parks Conservancy. The latest thinking is that a broader collaboration would be more effective than establishing a new non-profit. Among the advantages: eliminate cost of forming new non-profit; avoid competition for funding from limited donors. This idea was brought to the MMWD Watershed Committee (Board?) recently. With some more detail, the proposal will go to the Watershed Committee on April 11 for further direction, and may then be taken back to the public.

(Note: the MCL Water and Watersheds Committee is tracking this issue. It came before Parks and Open Space as an information item.)

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 11, 3:00 – 5:00

Minutes by Nona Dennis