

## MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

### Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting July 11, 2013

#### FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Susan Stompe, Larry Minikes, Tom Boss, Ernie Stanton, Robert Eichstaedt, Connie Perto, Greg Zitney, Jill Templeton, Judy Teichman, Linda , Director, and Mischon Martin, Natural Resource Ecologist, Project Manager (Marin County Parks).

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: 1) Joint Meetings of County Parks & Open Space Commission and Board of Supervisors on Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (July 16) and Road and Trail Management Plan and EIR (July 23); 2) Heritage Day, Friends of China Camp State Park; 3) MCL Picnic, July 27, at Tamalpais Valley Community Center; 4) MCL Walk into (Future Conservation) History: Old St. Hilary's and Tiburon Upland Nature Preserve, with focus on abutting Martha Co. ("Easton Pt.") property. Saturday, September 7, 9:30 – 1:00.

Two items added for Action: Draft letter to State Parks Commission in response to Little Hoover Commission Report on State Parks; and Draft letter to Board of Supervisors on safety, natural resource, and enforcement issues on County Open Space Preserves.

MINUTES for June 13, 2012 – Approved

#### ACTION ITEMS:

1. Affirmed that MCL will send letter with comments previously discussed on the Little Hoover Commission Report on State Parks. Susan reported that Ernest Chung, new Chair of the Parks Commission, says that the Little Hoover Report is probably going to be on the agenda of the Parks' Commission August 9 Agenda. At this time we have no further information about the "Parks Forward" initiative, for which a separate commission will be formed.
2. Following a brief recap of the recent accident on the Indian Tree OSP (teen-agers on mt. bikes speeding down an illegal trail, caused two horses to throw their riders, one of whom sustained serious injuries), the committee agreed that a letter should go to the Supervisors, as Board of Directors for the Open Space District, emphasizing the need for clear rules and increased enforcement on the Preserves. Nona will draft and send a letter (see attached).

#### INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Marin County Parks (Preliminary) Draft, Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan (VBMP): Linda Dahl, Director, and Mischon Martin, Project Manager, were both present to give a briefing on the Preliminary Draft of the VBMP, which has been in process for several years and will be presented to the Board of Supervisors and Parks Commission at a joint meeting on July 16. This subject occupied the majority of the meeting.

A great deal of research into current science, mapping of vegetation and sensitive plant species, consultation with other land management agencies, fire ecology experts, and other experts, have gone into the Plan. It will serve as a foundation for the Road and Trail Management Plan and other management decisions, and it sets goals for each of the Preserves. Linda made it clear that this is not a “Fire Plan”; rather is it a comprehensive plan that attempts to explain the relationship between fire safety and habitat. It takes a long view and considers how the fuel breaks are working and considers other strategies to reduce fire hazard. Parks Dept. has spent \$1.2 million in the past year dealing with broom management, much of it within fuel breaks. The Plan also takes an IPM approach to abating invasive species.

Mischon outlined the main areas of management addressed by the Plan:

- 1) Protection and restoration of natural resources, including special-status species – establish baseline, methods for rapid assessments, maps vegetation and establishes four Zones related to resource (plants and habitats) sensitivity and degree of disturbance;
- 2) Invasive plant management – strategies to prevent introduction, control spread, and eradicate where possible;
- 3) Fuel management – strategies to manage risk and reduce fire hazard through defensible space and appropriate locations for fuel breaks, modify fuel, create ingress and egress for emergency vehicles;
- 4) Forest health management – manage weakened and diseased trees, treat pathogens as appropriate, manage for multi-storied and -aged forest structure; and
- 5) Manage vegetation response to Climate Change – resilience, long-term adaptation.

The Plan is not prescriptive. Rather it describes decision-making tools that will enable prioritizing efforts and making informed decisions with other departments, agencies, and communities, such as for treatment of invasive weeds, fuel breaks, and annual projects. It also includes a set of best management practices for each type of vegetation.

Challenges that must be addressed: Shifting fuel reduction strategies to align with current science and with other land management agencies who are managing both for fire hazard and biodiversity; and using herbicides as part of an arsenal of IPM tools to tackle the invasive weed populations on public land. A major source of such populations is the removal of intact, native habitat (mainly chaparral) and allowing broom to take over within large fuel breaks cut through the middle of preserves.

The Parks Department is taking comments and suggestions on the Preliminary Draft until August 16. The EIR process will not begin until the Department has a draft Plan in hand, possibly late September. The EIR process will conclude sometime in mid 2014. The Preliminary Draft Plan is available on the Parks Department web site. Nona will draft comments on the Preliminary Draft for review by this Committee.

2. Updates on Marin State Parks: Ernie Stanton reported that Friends of China Camp voted to approve donor agreements with Tomales Bay State Park and Olompali – i.e., excess

funds from FOCC have been deposited in an account for State Parks personnel to run the two parks.

3. Report from County Parks and Open Space Commission: Greg Zitney reported that he and Larry Kennings have been reappointed to the Commission. For one other term that is up, Charles Higgins the incumbent, has moved to San Francisco, so will be interviewed with other candidates.

Other agenda items were deferred to a later meeting.

The next meeting is August 9, 2013

Minutes by Nona Dennis