

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Parks and Open Space Committee
August 9, 2018

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Larry Minikes, Linda Novy, Robert Eichstaedt, Arlin Weinberger, Larry Scheibel, Al Baumann, Pat Nelson, Susan Stompe, Larry Kennings, Susan Schlosser, Delos Putz, Eva Buxton, Tom Boss, Nancy Benjamin, Rick Fraites, Rick Holland, Jill Templeton, Louisa Morris (Bay Area Ridgetrail), Jon Campo and Ari Golan (MCP), Mike Swezy and Shaun Horne (One Tam), Bree Hardcastle and Cyndy Shafer (State Parks), Sharon Farrell (GG National Parks Conservancy), and Mia Monroe (GGNRA).

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) RTMP Public Workshop, Region 5, Aug. 25, 1:00 – 3:00, Embassy Suites; 2) Coastal Cleanup, September 15, Bay Model and Novato sites, 9:00 – noon; 3) China Camp SP Heritage Day, September 22; 4) MCL Walk into Conservation History: Marincello, September 29, 9:30 – 12:30; 5) MCL Business-Environment Breakfast: State Parks – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, November 15, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. Eva announced that 8 bills that would undermine the Endangered Species Act are pending in the Senate. Comments opposing the bills should go to your Senator by September 23.

MINUTES of June 14 and July 12, 2018 approved

INFORMATION UPDATES:

1. **Marin County Parks, Open Space District**
 - a. **RTMP project updates.** Jon Campo provided updates on projects in progress or recently completed: constructing a frog pond on Mt. Burdell, and culvert replacement on Bob Middagh Trail (completed). A Draft IS/Neg. Dec. for proposed Eagle Rim Trail realignment on Mt. Burdell, is open for comments, due by September 14.
 - b. **Region 5 preserves** will be the subject of a public workshop on designation of trails in Region 5 on Aug. 25, 1:00 – 3:00, at Embassy Suites. Staff studies of conditions and sensitive resources have been underway for 1 1/2 years, including plant surveys, habitat mapping, bat monitoring, burrowing animal investigations, and others. No significant adoptions are envisioned. However, some connections will be proposed, including on Terra Linda Ridge; future decommissions on San Pedro OSP and Terra Linda-Sleepy Hollow OSP; designation of existing social trails/fire roads on Bald Hill and recently acquired Sky Ranch and Heron Hill. A 60-day comment period will follow the workshop. Comments due October 26.
 - c. Jon described the process for arriving at a preferred option for road to trail conversion of Ponti fire road. Portions of the road will be used and some will require realignment to avoid steep gradients and eroded fire road. The multiuse trail would be roughly five feet wide, with gentler grade, and realigned to avoid sensitive species. Vehicle use will be eliminated. Questions were raised about adequacy of trail width for multiuse, concern about invasion of non-native annual grasses along new-cut trail, and concern that dogs formerly off-leash on the fire road will now have to be on-leash. Staff is continuing to refine a preferred alignment.

- c. Jon announced that the Open Space District is recommending purchase of a 167-acre piece of land in Bowman Canyon, west of Mt. Burdell, for \$2.5 million. The entire property is 850 acres and has long been a priority for preservation as open space. The recommendation goes to the Board for approval on August 21.
 - d. Committee members who attended the July 19 field demonstration of e-bikes on the Mill-Valley – Sausalito multiuse path commented on the exercise. About 20 attended. Several felt that there need to be more observations at different times of day showing different traffic patterns. Ari Golan explained that the staff wants more public feedback, before reviewing regulations. The next step will be a presentation and public comment at the Sept. 20 meeting of the Parks and OS Commission meeting.
3. **MMWD** Mike Swezy introduced Shaun Horne, new Natural Resources Program Manager for the MMWD watershed. Shaun gave the committee some of his background as a Resource Specialist with Napa County Watershed and Flood Control. Mike will introduce Aaron Fulton at the September 13 meeting. Mike gave a brief update on the Neg. Dec for Azalea Hill Restoration project and announced road closures for repair on Southern Marin Line Road (Crown Road trailhead), Phoenix Lake Road (Natalie Coffin Greene parking), and Concrete Pipe Road. All roads will be open to the public from 5 p.m. until sundown and on weekends if conditions allow.
3. **State Parks** Cyndy Shafer and Bree Hardcastle, State Park environmental scientists, were present to report on several aspects of Parks’ transformation state-wide and reorganization of state parks in Marin, and on new sources of funds to the state parks system. Many park units have been reorganized. The Bay Area District, which included Marin, has been split. The North Bay Area District now includes Southern Sonoma, Napa, and San Francisco counties as well as Marin. Angel Island SP and Candlestick Park in S. F., together, form a hybrid “sector.” Solano and Contra Costa Counties are in a different Bay Area District. As a result of the split, the N. Bay District’s responsible area has been reduced from 50,000-acres to 30,000. With the addition of new staff (below), staff capacity is effectively doubled. Management within the district has shifted from sector (and park unit) to program-based. Programs include Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Interpretation & Education, Facilities, Administrative (partnerships, concessionaires, CEQA compliance, other). Organization will vary from district to district; each district has a transition plan. Seventeen new staff and two new superintendents will serve the N.B. Area District, in natural and cultural resources, maintenance, rangers, education and interpretation, etc. Organization charts currently are under union review. New superintendents have not been announced.

Cyndy described two new sources of funds (other than state general fund). Last year’s SB 1 Gas tax increase legislation will yield funds for state parks’ general purposes from tax increase on boat and off-road vehicle gas consumption. These will fund new staff positions and deferred maintenance projects, etc. This year’s Prop 68 Parks and Water Bond Act will produce funds for general use by parks, projected projects, the Redwoods Rising program, and legacy forest projects, and others. Of \$218 M allocated to Parks, 19M is in the ‘2017-’18 budget. State parks will administer small grants to local city park projects, such as social and equity projects, safe routes to schools, and other neighborhood and community parks projects. Five \$M will go to fund state parks’ needs.

In response to questions about wildfires, Cyndy responded that State parks had to deal with fire on its own properties such as Annadel SP. DPR manages vegetation primarily for biodiversity,

but also is working with fire agencies (mainly Cal Fire) on fuel reduction projects and with homeowners whose properties abut state park lands, by granting permits to create defensible space. DPR is also preparing a program EIR that will cover creation of shaded fuel breaks on state park lands. Cyndy reported on visitor statistics from 2015-16: Mt. Tam State Park had more than 900,000 annual visitors, China Camp more than 300,000, Samuel P. Taylor over 100,000 visitors, Tomales Bay, 40,000, and Olompali, 7,400. Bree reported that construction on Bills Trail in S.P. Taylor Park was scheduled to resume in mid-August, and should be finished by the end of this year's construction season. Then it must cure without use for a year.

- 4. One Tam.** Sharon Farrell presented an overview of the next 5-year plan for One Tam partners. They are drawing on the experience of the first four years to determine what works well and how One Tam might "grow." They conducted many interviews with both staff and diverse stakeholders, and as a consequence determined not to consider expanding physical boundaries or bringing in any new partners. However, where specific programs can apply beyond present boundaries, One Tam is extending its reach and resources. For example, the \$1.2 M aerial LiDAR vegetation mapping project will cover the entire county, with major benefits to numerous agencies and organizations. It will also employ new vegetation classification for the County, based on CNPS and USFWS protocols. To avoid continuing name confusion, "Tamalpais Lands Collaborative" (TLC) will become "One Tam" as the primary identity. One Tam will explore several new or expanded initiatives: 1) expanded communication, e.g., by refreshing web site and adding more updates; 2) exploring historic and cultural resources within the geographic study area; and 3) exploring opportunities to expand trail stewardship programs.

One Tam's emerging 5-Year Strategy will be guided by six themes: 1) Awareness and engagement (connect the community to Mt. Tam's diverse resources); 2) Philanthropy and investment (inspire funding, stewardship, and leverage investments); 3) Partnership and collective impact (unite talents and resources of five partners with community interests and stakeholders through collaboration); 4) Projects (pursue priority projects based on best practice, good science, and sustainability); 5) Programs (high-quality community science and volunteer programs to engage youth in diverse pathways); and 6) Landscape-scale science and management (collect and synthesize data and research to guide management of Mt. Tam's natural resources at landscape-scale). Under these themes, One Tam has laid out a total of 30 goals that range broadly from strengthening the partners' internal operations and efficiencies, to fully integrating One Tam into the community fabric, and engaging youth and volunteers in community science, with the ultimate goal of advancing Mt. Tam's resiliency and long-term health.

The One Tam planning team will continue to refine the 5-year strategy and will present a draft to the partners' boards by late November, with a final strategy by February of 2019.

- 5. GGNRA/Muir Woods** Mia Monroe reported on activities and projects at Muir Woods and GGNRA. The reservation system is proving successful in leveling out and reducing total visitor numbers, especially at peak periods. Even during July 4 week, there were no 5,000 or 6,000-visitor days. The Water and Wastewater Improvement Project will get underway in September. It has been delayed by a new step in the project review process, namely review in Washington. Projects can no longer be approved locally. The Salmon Enhancement Project will not start until 2019. Traffic congestion and delays continue throughout the Headlands; a pilot project to redirect traffic for better flow will be attempted this weekend. GGNRA staff are tracking a

proposed 18-home development at the end of Donohue Ave. in Marin City. The proposed development property adjoins GGNRA land and the popular Alta trailhead.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45.

Minutes by Nona Dennis

The next meeting is September 13, 2018