

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE  
Parks and Open Space Committee  
November 14, 2018

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair, Greg Zitney, Larry Minikes, Linda Novy, Robert Eichstaedt, Doug Wilson, Arlin Weinberger, Susan Stompe, Eva Buxton, Tom Boss, Nancy Benjamin, Roger Roberts, Amory Willis, Rick Holland, Vicki Nichols, Jack Krystal, Rick Fraitas, Roger Rose, Rick Jones, Max Korten, Jon Campo, Ian McLorg, Ari Golan, and Dan Sauter (MCP), Mike Swezy, Shaun Horne, Don Wick (MMWD), Alexis Jones (State Parks), Jamie Shreeve, Kim Wik, Shalini Gopie?, David Shitzky (spelling?) and Mia Monroe (GGNRA).(Several names missing.) ,

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) MCL Business-Environment Breakfast: State Parks – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, November 15, 7:30 a.m.;2) MMWD Board Hearing, Azalea Hill, Dec. 3, 7:30; 3) GGNRA-County MOU, Progress, Public Meeting, Dec. 3, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Old Mill School; 4) MCL Holiday Party, Dec. 7, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m., at MCL; 5) MMWD Watershed Committee, Dec. 20, 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES of Oct. 11, approved with minor correction: change Shaun Foote to Shaun Horne.

The main purpose of the meeting was to review the procedures used by public land management agencies for reporting incidents, whether by staff or the public, how incidents are followed up, and how are they made available to the public. The discussion was preceded by brief status reports on current projects.

INFORMATION UPDATES:

1. **Marin County Parks.** Jon Campo gave an overview of projects underway, as the 2018 construction season winds down: Conifer Road Visitor Access improvements and Loma Alta Trail improvements are being completed. Staff received comments on the Region 5 draft designation map and will provide the final map. The Project Description for the 1.7-mile Ponti Ridge Road to Trail Conversion Project is posted on the website for review. Comments are due by December 7. The County's acquisition of a 167-acre parcel in Bowman Canyon is almost complete, with escrow due to close this week. Jon will arrange a field trip for the Environmental Roundtable on November 26. The acquisition will be known as "Addition to Mt. Burdell Open Space Preserve." The public meeting on Region 6 Designation Map is not expected until summer of 2019.
2. **MMWD:** Mike Swezy gave a brief update on the Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) EIR. The public can expect the Draft in early 2019. Public comments on the Azalea Hill Restoration Project Mitigated Neg. Dec. were due on November 8. MCL submitted comments. Adoption of the MND will be considered by the MMWD Board at their regularly scheduled meeting on November 20. A date in December (11?) will be set for a public workshop on e-bikes on watershed roads.

## DISCUSSION OF INCIDENT REPORTING

1. Marin County Parks, as reported by Dan Sauter and Ian McClorg (with input from Ari Golan and Max Kortzen), employs 10 rangers (?) across the open space preserves, with three regional superintendents. Incidents cover a gamut of conditions or activities in open space, as diverse as trail hazards, violation of trail regulations, illegal dumping, smoking, etc. Different ways to report include citizen reports, volunteer reports, and reports from ranger staff on patrol. Emergencies are reported by calling 911. A Marin County deputy sheriff supports the ranger staff. Ranger staff submits draft reports to appropriate superintendent for approval or possible correction before being recorded as data and, after 30 days, the report is uploaded onto County's open portal for public access. The discussion focused on how a citizen can report hazards, maintenance needs, visitor incidents, etc. A form is provided by MCP on line. Incidents can also be reported by email or by phone to rangers or other staff. Photos can be attached. Information on date, time, if recurring, etc., should be included in report. The committee asked several questions: How is report handled and made public? What happens to Volunteer reports? Is there a link to local social media, such as Next Door? Staff will explain the process and use of open portal website in greater detail at a future meeting. Next Door is used only for notifying local public of upcoming public neighborhood meetings.
2. MMWD, as reported by Mike Swezy and Don Wick, Chief Ranger. Employs procedures similar to County Open Space. There are several avenues to report conditions and incidents/activities. Emergencies are reported to 911. The ranger staff includes six rangers, including the chief, and their job is primarily to protect public safety. They are supported by two Marin County deputy sheriffs. Incidents are recorded as data, and the Board receives a monthly report. Some committee members pointed out that signage is limited on the watershed – e.g., speed limits, etc. Staff feel that existing signage posting regulations is adequate. Major trailheads have information posted on kiosks. (Wick: "We don't want to become a watershed of signs.") Theoretically, staff reports are available to the public, but the website is not well laid-out or user-friendly, so access to data is not easy. The committee also presented questions about sufficiency of budget to provide adequate ranger staff, and also concern about how (fire hazard) Red Flag Days are staffed. Mike explained that red flag days restrict automobile access, and event permits are cancelled to minimize walkers and cut down on number of visitors.
3. State Parks Supervising Ranger Lexi (Alexandra) Jones spoke about her job in State Parks in Marin. She is supervising ranger for Mt. Tam, but is also acting ranger for Tomales Bay, Samuel P. Taylor and Olompali. Unlike rangers for the County and MMWD, she is a sworn officer. She stated that rules and regulations are inconsistent across the state parks and their districts in the State and policies will vary. She works within the Bay District, which includes parks in Southern Sonoma and Napa as well as Marin, and is responsible for District regulations. As with other agencies, emergencies are handled through 911. Kiosks in the parks have numbers posted for the public to report an incident or condition; all reports are routed through Dispatch in Sacramento.

Majority of incidents being reported involve maintenance issues, such as downed trees or hazardous trail conditions, and these are routed to Maintenance, next to the Ranger Station on Mt. Tam S.P. at Pantoll. Lexi's scope of work in "Visitor Services" is very broad and could involve medical, criminal, commercial, as well as vehicular issues. Daily, she might deal with DUIs,

missing persons, fatalities, Red Flag days, etc. She gets information from emails, phone calls, or dispatches on a 24-hour basis. Rangers in Marin (currently a total of 8, including Lexi) are on call most of the time; she prioritizes reports, and more serious incidents get rapid attention. Note that China Camp S.P. does not use her services; they contract out with a security firm for non-sworn security services. Emergencies there are handled through 911, as on the other public lands

Data gathered from incident reports is not available to the public, nor does State Parks maintain statistics on incidents. Parks policy is to not provide information on incidents to the public (although it might be obtained through a FOIA request). State Parks does maintain an app to enhance various visitor experiences across all parks in the state, including finding parks, navigation, and other useful information. The app can also receive user-driven reports.

4. GGNRA, as reported by David Shitsky (spelling?), Chief Ranger, and input by Mia Monroe and others, operates at a very different level than other public lands. They receive more than 17 million visitors/year and experience 20,000 – 30,000 reportable incidents. Every conceivable type of crime can occur. “The world has gotten more complex!” Ranger staff of 30 fully sworn personnel are supported by a separate Park Police Force, the oldest national police force. As with other land agencies, emergencies are dealt with by calling 911. It is useful to have GIS to report exact locations of emergencies. Staff-driven reports are dispatched through park headquarters in San Francisco. The public can report non-emergencies in various ways – via website, email and a non-emergency phone number. The only way for the public to obtain information on incidents, however, would be through a FOIA request, and even then the Park Service is cautious about what information can be shared. If statistics are maintained to monitor incidents, they are not disclosed to the public.

The Committee thanked the numerous public safety personnel who attended the meeting and contributed to the discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Minutes by Nona Dennis

The next meeting is December 13, 2018