

**MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**  
**Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: January 8, 2014**  
**and brief notes for Jt. Land Use/Parks Committee January 9 meeting**

Present: Susan Stompe, chair; also Alan Bortel, Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Randy Greenberg, Bob Johnston, Ann Thomas, Doug Wilson, Periann Wood. Guests: Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture; Scott Alonso, Assemblyman Levine's office. Met 8:30 to 10:40 AM at MCL.

**December 4, 2013 Meeting Notes.** Approved as distributed.

**Agenda.** OK as distributed.

**Announcements.** 1) There will be a hearing before the San Rafael City Council January 21 regarding changes to the use conditions for the San Rafael Airport sports facility. This is a result of the lawsuit filed by the Gallinas Defense Committee challenging the adequacy of the EIR for the project. As a result the airport agreed to change hours of outdoor use and make safety adjustments in their program. This meeting would adopt the changes that were agreed upon. 2) MMWD directors at their January 7 meeting announced the start of district efforts to address the unusually dry year. 3) The Parks and Open Space Commission on January 23 will review all comments on the Road and Trail Mgmt Plan and staff needs support for recommendations.

**San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority.** Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Coordinator, reported on the formation of the SF Bay Restoration Authority, and planning for a possible nine-county ballot measure to raise funds for wetlands restoration around the Bay. The Joint Venture is a partnership coalition which coordinates wetlands projects around the Bay; since formation in 1997 it has worked on more than 150 wetland habitat projects. It works by bringing together partners and then leveraging available resources to get successful projects.

Save the Bay initiated legislation leading to formation of the SF Restoration Authority, created by the California legislature in 2008 with enactment of AB 2954. Its purpose is to raise and disburse funds for the restoration and protection of wetlands and wildlife habitat in the Bay and along its shoreline. Beth is on the 34-member Advisory Committee which has representatives of environmental, fisheries, business, and government groups from around the Bay. The project to develop a ballot measure is being led by Save the Bay, which is one of the Authority members. Passage of such a measure would require a total 2/3 vote of approval across the nine counties.

The Authority has identified about 250,000 acres of tidal and seasonal wetlands and diked baylands in need of restoration at a time when traditional funders for these projects have depleted funds. They estimate that about \$4.3 billion would be needed to deliver just the 12 largest projects. As a result they have done polling to test public support for a parcel tax for this purpose. A tax just under \$10 a parcel would raise an estimated \$15-17 million a year. Polling indicates that the Bay's values are important to the public, no matter how far the person polled lives in proximity to the Bay. More polling will be done this month and a decision made in July. An expenditure plan for funding is also being worked on. Support for the Authority's work is being sought. This would not be interpreted as endorsing a ballot measure not yet written.

**Recommendation.** M/S (Ann/Randy) and unanimously approved to recommend that MCL support the work of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority to raise regional funding for Bay wetlands restoration projects, with the understanding that this does not constitute endorsement of any specific ballot measure.

**CARMA.** Susan reported on a conversation with the operator of new inter-county carpool program available through an app. Committee thought MCL need not participate or endorse.

**Hwy 101/Greenbrae and Twin Cities Project/Marsh Walk.** There was no information yet on where the SMART r-o-w, along which the proposed greenway would run in conjunction with the highway project, is located. A field trip will be arranged when this information is available.

**Martha/Easton Point.** BoS action continued to February 25, 2014.

**Novato General Plan.** The state has approved the City's housing element which included designation of 20-23 units per acre for the affordable housing opportunity overlay. This could yield about 30 units per acre with the density bonus mandated by the state.

#### **Joint Land Use/Parks and Open Space Committees Meeting: January 9, 2014**

This meeting was to hear a presentation from Pt Reyes Seashore Park Service officials with regard to the tule elk problems in the park's pastoral zone. Almost 30 people were in attendance, including members of MCL Land Use and Parks committees, Pt Reyes Seashore Superintendent Cicely Muldoon, staffers David Press, Brannon Ketchum, Melanie Gunn ; Sonoma County UC Farm Advisor Stephanie Larson; several West Marin ranchers; Scott Alonso for Assemblyman Levine's office; representatives from the Agricultural Commissioner's office and MMWD; and interested public.

Complete notes on this meeting are in the Parks and Open Space Committee minutes.

Ms. Muldoon said that the park service is about to embark on preparation of a plan that will provide for 20-year leases for the ranches in the park's pastoral zone (leases are currently five and ten years) and that the park service is currently in a pre-scoping mode for an Environmental Assessment (E.A.) for this plan. The plan will address the elk situation and update the existing 1998 elk plan, as well as other issues including diversification and more innovative partnerships. "It will have the ability," she said, "for anyone who wants to get a 20-year lease."

Scoping for the likely two-year environmental process should be underway in March or April, she said. Brannon said that during the planning process the current leases will be extended.

There was a lot of discussion about the problems the elk are causing for the ranchers, and measures that have been considered or used by the park service to control the wanderers. The elk in the pastoral zone migrated from a wilderness area where they had been located earlier. It was generally acknowledged that information gathered in an E.A. process would be productive and that MCL would not take any further action until scoping was underway.

[Ed. Note: tule elk is a subspecies of elk found only in California. Adult males weigh 450-550 pounds, and females average 375-425 pounds. They eat grasses, herbaceous plants, and the leaves of coniferous trees and herds move around to find fresh vegetation. The smallest of the elk family, the tule were almost extirpated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from hunting but the wild population is now about 4,000 individuals.]

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