

May 20, 2015

The Honorable Jared Huffman
United States House of Representatives
999 Fifth Avenue, Suite 290
San Rafael, CA 94901



Subject: Memorandum of Understanding Between National Park Service and County of Marin

Dear Congressman Huffman:

Marin Conservation League has been preserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural assets of Marin County for more than 80 years. We are writing to support the May 8, 2015 Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Park Service and County of Marin in principle. Marin Conservation League recognizes that this MOU is the product of six months of concentrated work among interested parties, including four stakeholder workshops convened by you and your staff, to help resolve major issues that have plagued areas adjacent to Muir Woods National Monument and Southern Marin gateway communities for years. These issues include hazardous and environmentally damaging parking along Muir Woods Road, traffic congestion in local communities, and concerns about the long-term health of the redwood and creek ecosystem and salmonid habitat especially downstream of the Monument. As of May 11, the fourth of the workshops, relatively few provisions in the Draft MOU remained to be resolved with specific details. Except for these issues, the MOU was ready to move forward to signing and implementation by the NPS and the County.

While not all problems that prompted the preparation of the MOU can be readily solved (weekend and peak traffic through the gateway communities), much can be done to alleviate congestion through developing a reservation system for visitors to Muir Woods, as planned by the NPS. This could lower the peak visitation periods that currently overwhelm the local traffic and parking infrastructure. MCL's particular interest is two-fold: the need to reduce parking along Muir Woods Road that deposits unknown quantities of pollutants on the road and shoulder; and the requirement to install best management practices to inhibit those pollutants from entering the creek with storm water runoff, thereby degrading habitat for threatened coho salmon and steelhead. A number of provisions in the MOU establish the shared responsibilities of the NPS, County, and California Department of Parks and Recreation to institute best management practices on an interim basis (i.e., almost immediately after signing the MOU, and during stepped-down reduction in parking) as well as maintain such practices over the long term, to address this concern. These are key provisions, because reducing parking alone will not remove the pollutants that have accumulated over past years of use.

In sum, MCL feels that the MOU paves the way for responsible parties to begin implementing planned improvements and working toward the long term health of the Monument and Redwood Creek, and a better quality of life in the surrounding communities.

Sincerely yours,

Kate Powers, President

Nona Dennis, 1st Vice President

cc: Supervisors Steve Kinsey and Kate Sears; Christine Lehnertz, Superintendent, GGNRA; Bill Lutton, Superintendent, Marin Sector, California State Parks

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