

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

90 Years of Protecting & Preserving Marin

PRESERVE

PROTECT

ENHANCE

ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

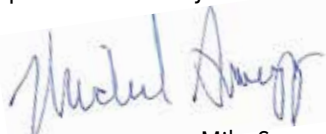


As we look back on MCL's recent achievements, we are stunned by how radically the world has changed over a single year. The threats are daunting. Marin, California, and our nation are challenged by cancellation of national climate initiatives and by moves that would halt California's world-leading efforts to remove gas-powered vehicles from the road. We're experiencing attacks on national parks, on longstanding environmental regulations, and on our most vulnerable community members by our own federal government. The outlook appears dark.

However, MCL is rising to meet the moment by investing renewed focus and advocacy on our most important issues. We have hired a capable new executive director, Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, who will strengthen our voice and impact on critical concerns. We have also recruited a new office manager/administrator, Rae Peres, to replace Martha Richter Smith who retired from MCL after five years of service. We will share more about staff additions in the coming year but now let us focus on the past year's work.

MCL is well-known for our reliance on science, for addressing complex environmental issues through well-considered policies, and for having the persistence and heart to continue advocacy through thick and thin. One of our hallmarks is convening and collaboration. MCL's committees are the foundation of MCL's work. Meetings are designed to increase understanding of issues and enable acting in informed ways to successfully influence public policies and decision-making. We work closely with local and regional government and with our allies in local conservation. MCL board members serve on a surprising number of advisory boards, citizen oversight committees, and stakeholder committees throughout the County.

We are proud to present our 2024-25 Annual Report as evidence of our ongoing dedication to accomplishing our Environmental Goals, and to remaining vigilant and engaged with the challenges ahead. To learn more about our accomplishments or to join in our work, please contact us at mcl@marinconservationleague.org.



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Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg
Executive Director
Rae Peres
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and Administrator

MCL'S ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

- ≈ Preserve natural resources through stewarding our public lands.
- ≈ Reduce wildfire risk while protecting native habitats.
- ≈ Preserve ecological systems and watersheds across all lands and waters.
- ≈ Rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration, and adapt to climate change.
- ≈ Prioritize protecting the world and ecosystems, and simultaneously promoting equity and quality of life, in local and regional planning.
- ≈ Collaborate across boundaries to connect natural and working landscapes.
- ≈ Preserve and enhance biodiversity of native species and habitats.



MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER



The Statement of Activities summarizes MCL's 2024 financial results for MCL as a whole and for each of the separate funds maintained by MCL. The figures are from MCL's financial records and are not audited.

MCL has three funds: the Unrestricted Fund supports MCL's daily operations, advocacy, and education programs. The Temporarily Restricted Fund records MCL's management of funds which are dedicated to specific projects.

Finally, the Board Restricted Fund records the income and expenditures of MCL's Legacy of the Land (LOL) endowment. In 2024, this Fund provided \$85,740 in support for MCL's activities.

This year the Unrestricted Fund, due to greater than expected expenses, had an operating loss. The loss was accompanied by an increase in the value of MCL's investments. The gain in the Temporarily Restricted Funds came mainly from a grant received for the Willow Creek project. During 2024 the Legacy of the Land increased in value significantly because of a market upswing.

MCL thanks all of its members for their support during this productive year.

Richard Jensen, Treasurer

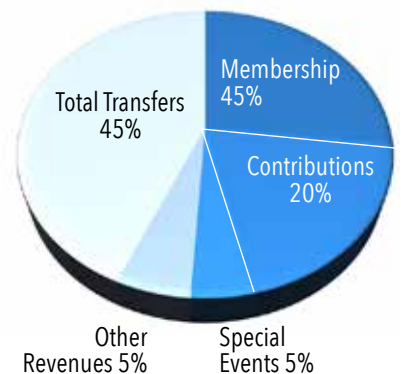
Statement of Activities (unaudited)

January 1 2024 to December 31, 2024 | Prepared from MCL's Financial Statements

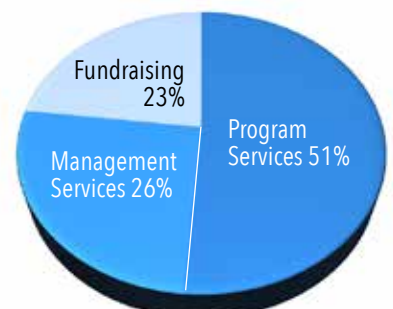
OPERATIONS

	Unrestricted (Operations)	Temporarily Restricted (Projects/Dedicated)	Board Restricted Legacy of the Land)	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE				
Support				
Membership	\$84,512			\$84,512
Contributions	\$62,127	\$150	\$232,645	\$294,922
Special Events	\$14,230			\$14,230
Total Support	\$160,869	\$150	\$232,645	\$393,664
Revenue				
Interest & Dividend Income	\$14,639		\$54,404	\$69,043
Capital Gain Distributed			\$20,917	\$20,917
Grants Received	\$2,600	\$10,000		\$12,600
Other Revenue	\$17,239	\$10,000	\$75,321	\$102,560
Transfers				
Legacy of the Land Support for Operations	\$85,740		(\$85,740)	
Operations Reserve Transfer	\$51,360			
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Transfers	\$137,100	\$0	(\$85,740)	
Total Support, Revenue & Transfers	\$315,208	\$10,150	\$222,226	\$547,584
EXPENSES				
Program Services	\$168,918			\$168,918
Management Services	\$84,439			\$84,439
Fundraising	\$75,933			\$75,933
Total Expenses	\$329,290	\$0	\$0	\$329,290
Results from Operations	(\$14,082)	\$10,150	\$222,226	\$218,294
Investment Gain, Realized & Unrealized	\$65,881	\$0	\$203,352	\$269,233
Change in Equity 2024	\$51,799	\$10,150	\$425,578	\$487,527
Total Equity, Year End 2023	\$448,456	\$32,040	\$2,551,858	\$3,032,354
Total Equity, Year End 2024	\$500,255	\$42,190	\$2,977,436	\$3,519,881

2024 Income—Operations



2024 Expenses—Operations





MISSION-DRIVEN ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

For over 90 years, MCL has been governed by our mission: *Preserve, protect, and enhance Marin's natural assets in a changing environment.*

PARKS and OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee (POS) has pursued the acquisition and stewardship of special lands for public enjoyment since its inception. The POS committee is MCL's primary voice for biodiversity, advocating on behalf of the county's natural and sensitive resources by actively engaging in the planning and management of federal, state, county, and watershed district park and open space lands that now make up more than half of the county. The committee also advocates for protecting ecosystem services and cultural values on private open space, most of it in working (agricultural) landscapes that cover almost a third of the county. Over the past year, MCL's POS committee has:

- ▶ Hosted education on the status of local wildlife species of special interest. A National Park Service wildlife biologist reported on the results of long-term monitoring of pinnipeds – harbor and elephant seals – on Point Reyes National Seashore, a favored breeding site. Marin County Parks' wildlife biologist explained how the department conducts nesting bird surveys in advance of construction and maintenance projects.
- ▶ Joined two other conservation organizations in filing, and successfully settling, a legal complaint against Marin Water for failing to conduct adequate environmental review of bike and E-bike access programs, as part of MCL's ongoing effort to champion prioritization of water quality and biodiversity protection as recreation demands continue to intensify on the Marin Water District watershed. The broader outcome of the settlement will be a stronger foundation for moving forward in recreation planning.
- ▶ Engaged wildfire experts from other Bay Area agencies in sharing state-of-the-art techniques for strategic siting of fuel breaks and other vegetation management methods intended to preserve and enhance native vegetation and wildlife habitats while protecting people and property from wildfire risk.

- ▶ Continued to advocate for prescribed fire as an ecologically and economically beneficial tool for vegetation management for fuel reduction, engaging experts in both current and traditional tribal knowledge.



- ▶ Continued collaboration in pursuing funding sources for the extension of a water supply pipeline from Muir Woods to Muir Beach. The pipeline would reduce the need to divert water from the creek during the dry season with the aim of enhancing coho salmon and aquatic habitat in Redwood Creek during low flow periods.
- ▶ Convened Marin's land management agencies to report on their annual accumulated acreage and methods used to remove or otherwise manage vegetation to reduce risk of wildfire, as an effort to estimate "cumulative impacts".
- ▶ Examined Marin's biodiversity and threats to it at both regional and landscape levels through presentations on the Ten-Year Vision of the Greater Farallones and Cordell Banks National Wildlife Refuge, and the Climate Vulnerability Assessment of the Golden Gate Biosphere Network.

LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, and WATER COMMITTEE

As MCL's oldest continuous committee, MCL's Land Use, Transportation, and Water Committee (LUTW) tracks the activities of public agencies, monitors projects, provides public input during planning and environmental review processes, and advocates to decision makers on planning issues and projects of countywide significance.

Over the past year, MCL's LUTW committee has:

- ▶ Advocated against amendments to the Marin Countywide Plan and Development Code that weakened protections from development on parcels in the County's "Ridge and Upland Greenbelt" and "Baylands" areas.
- ▶ Commented on draft environmental documents for key housing projects including the redevelopment of Northgate Mall in San Rafael, the Seminary Site development in Strawberry, the Coast Guard site housing development in Point Reyes Station, Habitat for Humanity housing development in Novato and Mill Valley's One Hamilton and Marinwood Plaza's 100% affordable housing developments.
- ▶ Requested that Marin Water pause approval of the Phoenix/Bon Tempe Reservoir connection project until a thorough analysis was completed for potential impacts to fish, hydrology and water quality. Requested that North Marin Water District prioritize a minimum 50-foot setback from Novato Creek for siting of Lynwood Pump Station replacement.
- ▶ Provided comment and expressed support for the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC) draft Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan (RSAP), a guide and "toolbox" for local governments in the Bay Area region to plan for sea level rise (SLR) adaptation.
- ▶ Hosted a variety of presentations on local and regional SLR adaptation. Topics included Senate Bill 272, BCDC's RSAP guidelines document, County SLR governance structure study, and current phases of Marin jurisdictions' adaptation project planning and implementation.
- ▶ Urged California state senators, assembly members, and the governor to protect and preserve the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- ▶ Opposed bills that would allow take of California's Fully Protected Species for the

MCL'S 2024-25 Actions and Accomplishments

Achieving MCL's environmental goals is accomplished through the work of MCL's issues committees.

MCL's committees research issues, draft and vet MCL policy and positions, and advocate before supervisors, planning agencies, city councils and other decision makers to ensure that environmental protection in Marin remains a priority.

construction of SR 37's Interim road widening project. Advocated for Caltrans, legislators and stakeholder agencies to alternatively invest resources and focus on accelerating implementation of segments of Caltrans SR 37 sea level rise adaptation project that would lift the roadway onto a causeway.

CLIMATE ACTION WORKING GROUP

In support of MCL's mission, MCL's Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) advocates for innovative technologies and policies that accelerate greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and slow climate change which damage natural assets. CAWG's advocacy priorities are to more quickly: electrify everything, clean up the electricity grid by reducing GHG emissions, and remove carbon from the atmosphere. CAWG advocates to local



energy leaders and to state and local elected officials and their agencies. CAWG meetings function as forums for community groups concerned with climate change. **Over the past year, MCL's CAWG has:**

- ▶ Hosted Assemblymember Damon Connelly and supported legislative action to lower electric rates to promote equity and facilitate the effort to electrify transportation and buildings.
- ▶ Advocated to MCE (Marin Clean Energy) for transparency in how they propose to spend millions of dollars in surplus revenue and that MCE's surplus be used to expand community programs to stimulate electrification, install solar and batteries on local government buildings, and reduce electric rates.

- ▶ Supported the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Rule 9-7 which calls for ending the sale of gas water heaters in 2027 and gas furnaces in 2029. In addition to producing GHG emissions, gas water heaters and furnaces are two of the largest contributors of nitrous oxide (Nox), particulates, and other air pollutants which negatively impact human health.

- ▶ Hosted representatives of Peninsula Clean Energy, Sunrun, and the Clean Coalition to educate our members about Virtual Power Plants and how distributed generation, such as rooftop solar and batteries, can reduce electric costs and increase local resiliency in the face of wildfire or earthquake threats.

- ▶ Advocated for the Marin County Electrification Roadmap approval by the Board of Supervisors and local town councils. CAWG also hosted the Sustainability Coordinators of Corte Madera, San Anselmo/Fairfax and Mill Valley/Tiburon to learn about local jurisdictions' priorities and how we can contribute to their effectiveness.

- ▶ Co-hosted a program on home hardening and the homeowners' insurance crisis with the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority's Ecologically Sound Practices Partnership to educate our members on how they can improve the fire safety of their homes and what it will take to limit insurance rate increases in the face of increased wildfire risk from climate change.

- ▶ Hosted Cool the Earth, Peninsula Clean Energy and MCE updates on the relative costs of electric vehicles and efforts underway to expand vehicle charging, especially by installing chargers in multifamily housing—essential for an equitable energy transition.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

In addition to the dozens of speaker presentations at MCL's monthly issues committee meetings, MCL provides a variety of educational opportunities throughout the year on general topics of broad appeal. Events and programs include recurring Wednesday After Hours webinars, Friday Business-Environment Breakfasts, and Saturday Walks into Conservation History. Some of this year's programs included:

- ▶ Ecologist Megan Walla Murphy speaking about bears [and recent sightings in Marin] and their role in contributing to the health and biodiversity of ecosystems;
- ▶ Presentations by coastal resilience specialist Stuart Siegel and by Regional Water Quality Control Board's Christina Toms on the future of marshlands along Marin's bay shorelines and the need for long-term, landscape-scale, nature-based approaches as effective climate change adaptation strategies;
- ▶ CalTrout's Charlie Schneider shared information on the decommissioning of PG&E's Potter Valley hydroelectric facility on the Eel River, the associated removal of two dams, and plans for restoring salmon and steelhead migration to their historic spawning grounds. The webinar was followed by a field trip to the PG&E facility on the Eel.



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SPECIAL THANKS

To Larry Scheibel for permission to use his beautiful photos: bobcat and elephant seal (pg 4), sunrise (pgs 6 and 7), lizard (pg 8).

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2024–2025 Annual Report

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We must act today if we believe in preserving,
protecting, and enhancing for the future.



A Legacy of Conservation

MCL played a major role in preserving and protecting many of Marin's most stunning and well-loved landscapes.

MCL MISSION AT A GLANCE

Marin Conservation League works to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural assets of Marin in an era of climate and other environmental changes, focusing its action on issues that are significant countywide or may be precedent-setting.

MCL places particular emphasis on issues having important impacts on Marin's environment—especially native biodiversity, equity, and quality of life.

MCL seeks effective solutions by advocating and educating, and by collaborating closely with other organizations and the public, to address major environmental challenges and concerns in Marin.

MCL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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