

*Downtown San Rafael*

## Planning for growth: seeking a paced approach



*Dru Parker*

*Mahon Creek, which flows into the San Rafael Canal and out to the Bay, is both greenway and likely corridor for rising seas to enter downtown San Rafael.*

by *Kate Powers*

The City of San Rafael is currently juggling several downtown projects, some under construction, others in various stages of environmental and planning review. Collectively, they will intensify development near Highway 101 and impact nearby San Rafael neighborhoods. This rapid surge in growth raises several questions concerning what is at stake.

How will development and redevelopment affect existing retail, services, and infrastructure downtown? How will the historic values in San Rafael be preserved? How will proposed developments impact the quality of life or change the character of nearby neighborhoods? How does the cumulative development fit the Vision of [San Rafael's General Plan](#)? And what are San Rafael's desired targets for future jobs and population growth? Answers to these questions, and the way future development

unfolds, will not only greatly impact the community of San Rafael but also the aesthetics and functionality of this area of Marin County. One way to understand the issues is by framing them as "corridors."

### *City-Centered Corridor*

San Rafael lies within the city-centered corridor described in Marin's [Countywide Plan](#). Downtown San Rafael's SMART station lies within a Priority Development Area (PDA). PDA designation brings dollars to the City for development within or affecting the PDA. Higher densities are expected as part of the proposed transit-oriented design in San Rafael's [Downtown Station Area Plan](#), and so, do not come as a surprise.

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## Marin's action on climate

by *Doug Wilson*

With the upcoming [2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) to be held in Paris from November 30 to December 11, it is a significant time to review local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). At a recent October meeting of the MCL Climate Action Working Group (CAWG), Dana Armanino, Marin County Sustainability Planner, presented an overview of progress in unincorporated areas of the county as documented in the County's Draft Climate Action Plan 2015 Update (CAP Update). The draft Plan was first released in August 2014 and substantially revised in response to extensive public comment. It is scheduled for adoption by the Board of Supervisors on November 10.

Marin County continues to be on the forefront of local climate action planning, Armanino reported, based on reductions in

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## A Message from the President

**W**hy Marin Conservation League and not Marin Restoration League you ask? The answer may seem obvious.

Marin's ecosystems are complex and dynamic. They have evolved over millennia with associations between plant and animal species and natural processes that we don't fully understand. Conservation pays deference to these natural systems. Restoration, at best, makes reparations to them and restoration efforts often entail years of disruption, tons of coordination by various agencies, and lots of money. Restoration requires a successful guess at what an ecosystem may have been at some pinpoint in time before human alteration. Restoration efforts are very important in recovering habitat value in degraded landscapes. But conservation in the first place makes the most sense.

Much of MCL's committee work involves advocacy around conservation: water

conservation as the key strategy to deal with drought, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction as necessary for climate change action, protection of our parks and open spaces from biological threats or human misuse, and promotion of resource protection in land use, agricultural, and transportation planning.

Conservation efforts require ongoing and conscientious management. At Marin Conservation League, we are grateful for the competence and dedication of our local land managers and planners, the intelligence and balance with which our elected and appointed leaders listen to and approach controversial issues, the collaboration progressing between various agencies in federal, state, county and city jurisdictions throughout Marin, and for our fellow stakeholders who participate in the democratic process. Our rapidly changing world requires that we work together to make decisions based on best available

science and that we manage in a way that is adaptive, not mired in ideology.

I like the quote by Eden Phillpotts, "The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper." As is often said, we don't know what we don't know. But collectively and collaboratively, I think we share many of the same ideals as we work to conserve and protect the vision that preceded us, and a place we all know and love.

I, and my fellow Boardmembers, hope you will join us at our Annual Holiday Party, Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. See [page 12](#) for more details.



## Status Updates

### IPM and invasive plant species on open space lands

The Marin County Parks Open Space District's 34 open space preserves are managed under the direction of the Marin Board of Supervisors sitting as the District's Board of Directors. In response to a recent public demonstration against the use of herbicides, specifically glyphosate, the active ingredient in "Round-up," in controlling invasive non-native plants on open space lands, the Board held a public workshop on October 6. The purpose of the meeting was to review control programs currently in use by District staff and the Marin County Fire Department, and to learn about risk implications of the recent listing by the World Health Organization of glyphosate as a "probable human carcinogen." Some 150–200 people attended; 50 spoke on various sides of the issue.

Recognizing the enormous damage that invasive plants can inflict on open space native habitats and the increased wildfire danger where such plants are not

*MCL believes that the exponential increase in invasive plants on public lands can only be controlled in accordance with an IPM approach.*

controlled, MCL spoke in defense of using tools with the least environmental impact on other plants, wildlife, and humans. That could include minimal and cautious use of herbicide. MCL believes that the exponential increase in invasive plants on open space lands can only be controlled with access to a variety of tools, including mechanical, physical, biological tools, and, where these are infeasible or ineffective, chemical tools, in accordance with an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. (See [MCL Newsletters November–December 2014](#), and [September–October 2015](#).)

### Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) continues roll-out

The Marin County Parks Department continued its implementation of the RTMP by conducting a second public workshop on October 3, covering Region 2. This region includes the popular Giacomini, Cascade Canyon, and Roy's Redwoods Open Space Preserves, among others. (The Region 1 workshop was held earlier this year in March.) More than 200 people showed up for a lengthy explanation of the Department's process of determining which of many informal and formal trails will be designated as 'system' trails. It was followed by a chaotic session consisting of a dozen breakout groups crowding around confusing and hard-to-read maps and dictating their desires for trails to the patient Parks staff facilitators/recorders. Much as the Department would like to

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## Status Updates

### RTMP from page 3

conduct an orderly democratic process, it has not yet found the secret. The RTMP implementation process continues to give sensitive natural resources short shrift, and to respond to the loudest and most persistent voices.



*Dru Parker*

*Giacomini Open Space Preserve lies in the RTMP Region 2.*

Throughout the RTMP's four-year development, Parks staff promised to provide the public with a science-based plan (actually a road map) with the goal of developing over time a sustainable, resource-protective, and safe plan for recreational use of the preserves. In the wake of the recent meetings, at which demand for instant gratification seems to have ruled the day, progress toward that goal seemed elusive. The next step—staff evaluation of the first round of proposals for actual projects—will offer a clearer picture of the Department's decision process and intentions.

## Forward movement on Muir Woods traffic and parking

Controversy has brewed for many years over chronic problems of traffic clogging local gateway communities en route to Muir Woods and other coastal destinations, and the related problem of overflow parking along Muir Woods Road (aka Franks Valley Road) (see MCL Newsletter [January-](#)

February 2014). On peak visitation days, up to 400 cars try to park on shoulders of the County road, creating hazardous conditions for walkers to the Monument entrance, and contributing pollutants to adjacent Redwood Creek. After years of partial solutions (such as Marin Transit shuttle service from Manzanita parking lot and "Parking Lots Full" signs on 101) a continuing impasse between National Park Service and County and local residents prompted Congressman Jared Huffman to convene a stakeholders group last November to air the issues and consider possible solutions.

The outcome of four stakeholder meetings was a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NPS and the County that laid out timetables for NPS and/or the County to institute a reservation system for Muir Woods by 2017; to reduce parking on Franks Valley Road from current peaks of 400 plus cars below the Redwood Creek Bridge to a maximum of 80 after two years, 40 after four and a half years, and zero after seven years (leaving thirty spaces to remain above the bridge); and to implement interim storm water management measures to protect water quality for endangered Coho salmon habitat in the Creek. Subsequent negotiations prompted by Mt. Tam Task



©National Park Service, photo by Ranger Lou Solas-Siam

*Muir Woods Shuttle buses at the Park entrance.*

## MCL needs YOU!

**Interested in serving on the Marin Conservation League Board of Directors?**

**MCL's Board Members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and have a diversity of interest and experience. Add your voice!**

**Marin Conservation League's Nominating Committee is now accepting applications for terms beginning in the spring of 2016.**

**Contact committee Chair Susan Stompe at 415-897-1610 or [ssstompe@aol.com](mailto:ssstompe@aol.com) for more information.**

Force shortened the time table for the 80-parking space limit to this year.

Mia Monroe, NPS liaison to the Marin community, including MCL, recently outlined the programs that have already been undertaken by NPS and the County to install parking barriers and signs and enforce violations, and to undertake interim "best management practices" to improve the quality of runoff into Redwood Creek. Further collaboration between NPS, the County, and Mt. Tamalpais State Park will improve the roadway and repair or replace culverts to better protect creek habitat from polluted runoff. The reservation system is on schedule to launch in 2017; an Environmental Assessment has been completed and is out for public comment. On the County's side, Supervisors Steve Kinsey's and Kate Sears' districts both include affected county lands; working closely with the County's Department of Public Works staff, both supervisors have been deeply involved in shaping details in the MOU.

Events

Hands-on workshop Saturday, November 14

# Creek restoration with native willows at Chileno Valley Ranch

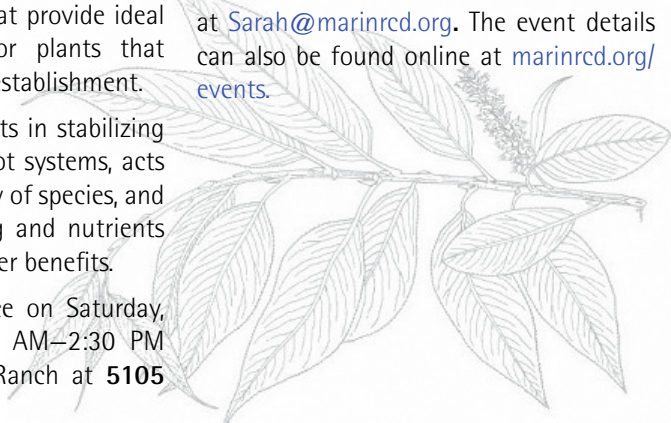
MCL, Repurpose, and Marin Resource Conservation District (RCD), with rancher Sally Gale, will be offering a free workshop to teach participants how to conduct one aspect of restoration through the use of native willows. The event is a work day in which participants will learn how to identify, cut, prepare and then stake willow cuttings. Willows are known to be strong riparian pioneers that provide ideal germination conditions for plants that require shade during their establishment.

Riparian vegetation assists in stabilizing creek banks through its root systems, acts as habitat for a wide variety of species, and provides necessary shading and nutrients for the streams, among other benefits.

The event will take place on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 AM–2:30 PM at Mike and Sally Gale's Ranch at 5105

Chileno Valley Rd. Petaluma. Participants need to bring a lunch, sunscreen, water bottle, sturdy shoes and any hand tools if they have them (loppers, pruners, hammers and hand saws). Some tools will be available for those that don't have them. Snacks and water will be provided.

Please RSVP to Sarah Phillips, Urban Streams Coordinator with the Marin RCD at [Sarah@marinrcd.org](mailto:Sarah@marinrcd.org). The event details can also be found online at [marinrcd.org/events](http://marinrcd.org/events).



Monday, November 9

7:00–9:00 PM

Angelico Hall,  
Dominican University

# Time to Lead on Climate—CA: US: UN

Marin Conservation League, Organizing for Action, Sustainable San Rafael and two dozen other Marin environmental and social action groups will present "Time to Lead on Climate: CA: US: UN" on Monday, November 9, 7-9 pm, in Angelico Hall at Dominican University of California.

Timed just prior to the kick-off of this year's UN Climate Conference in Paris and next year's US Presidential and Congressional elections—and energized by California's growing climate leadership and the Pope's call for global action—the event poses the increasingly urgent question, How do we fire up the political will to solve Climate Change, and what can each of us do to help?



Speakers include Congressman **Jared Huffman** (pictured); UN Climate Delegate **Ken Alex** with the Office of Governor **Jerry Brown**; **Josh Fryday**, NextGen Climate Action; and **Susan Stephenson**, Interfaith Power & Light. **Bill McKibben**, founder of [350.org](http://350.org), will speak by video. Dominican President **Mary Marcy** will moderate.

For tickets and information visit [leadonclimate.org](http://leadonclimate.org).

# Senior Walks a Measure A success

On September 24 MCL hosted the first of six Senior Walks funded in partnership with [Marin County Parks](http://Marin County Parks) and Measure A. Nearly 20 Seniors enjoyed a leisurely hike around Santa Margarita Island, followed a walk around Turtle Back at China Camp State Park. Transportation was provided from two pick up locations.



Greg Zitney

The group enjoyed a snack while continuing to talk about the areas visited and other topics regarding the Marin County Parks and Open Spaces. The attendees complimented the leader, Nona Dennis, and MCL for a wonderful outing and looked forward to attending future walks.

The second Walk, at Rush Creek, was held on October 22. Stay tuned for information on the four remaining Walks to be announced in early 2016.

Events

# 2015 Leaders Circle Picnic

A fine October day met members of MCL's Leaders Circle on Saturday, October 10, at McNears Beach Park in San Rafael. Guests enjoyed lunch by *Delicious!* and were treated to a timely and informative presentation by Marc Holmes of The Bay Institute on how Bay communities are responding to sea level rise.

Many thanks to Vicki Nichols, Susan Stompe, Stu Smith, and Marc Holmes for making this annual event so special.

For more information on MCL Leaders Circle, contact the MCL office at 415-485-6257 or [mcl@marinconservationleague.org](mailto:mcl@marinconservationleague.org).



photos by Dru Parker

Top: Leaders Circle members enjoy lunch against the backdrop of San Pablo Bay; bottom: Perianne Wood and Kay Gillis

# Collecting trash—and tires—from the shoreline

by Nona Dennis and Roger Roberts

## Coastal Cleanup

Marin Conservation League traditionally hosts two or three volunteer sites on **California Coastal Cleanup Day** held annually on the third Saturday of September. This year the two MCL sites were in Novato at Scottsdale Pond, and Sausalito in front of the Bay Model.

Now in its 31<sup>st</sup> year, the program was the brainchild of former California Coastal Commission staffer Jack Liebster, a principal planner in Marin County's Community Development Agency. True to long habit, Jack showed up on September 19 at the Bay Model for his annual three-hour stint of collecting trash along the Richardson Bay shoreline. MCL's leaders for this year's endeavors were Susan Stompe at Novato's Scottsdale Pond, and Vicki Nichols at the Bay Model in Sausalito. Scottsdale Pond volunteers were delighted to spot a family

of river otters in the pond, a good indicator of the improving health of the habitat.

This year's effort was a success by any measure: the final report for Marin County showed that 1,605 volunteers at 51 sites covering 101 miles of shoreline retrieved 12,132 pounds (6 tons) of trash, including 2,518 pounds of recyclable material. Among the items retrieved were flat-screen TVs, surfboards, bicycles, road signs, countless tennis balls and cigarette butts, and, oddly, a Viking hat.

2015 is a particularly critical year for cleanup; the El Nino rains anticipated before year's end will wash any exposed debris back out into the ocean to continue to pollute habitat and contribute to fatalities of fish and other ocean-going wildlife due to entanglement and ingestion.

## Removing tires from San Rafael mudflat, a cooperative effort

In past years, MCL hosted a volunteer cleanup site along the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Trail that follows the rip-rapped shoreline of East San Rafael. During a cleanup some years ago former MCL Board member and past San Rafael Planning Commissioner Dan Sonnet noticed that as the bay receded under an ebbing tide, dozens of tires became visible in the mudflat. They were ugly, spoiling the scenic view across San Rafael Bay toward Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

Sonnet mentioned his concern to fellow San Rafael resident Roger Roberts, then-president of MCL. Roberts agreed. "At minus tides there were 50 to 60 tires there in the mud—an eyesore and a pollutant over the



Vicki Nichols

Sausalito Bay Model Coastal Cleanup volunteer Harris Naouri shows off his bucket of trash.

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## Cleanup *from page 5*

long term. Who knows how they got here. We think people just threw them in the bay and some washed up here." (*Marin IJ*, August 13, 2014.)

Roberts and Sonnet began hatching a plan to get rid of the tires. It took several years of informal inquiries to enlist the interest of the "Green Committee" of San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), Marin Recycling, and nearby property owners. What would it take to extract the entrapped tires from the mud—a barge-mounted crane perhaps? What permits would be required, and how long would it take to obtain them? Who would take the tires for disposal, once removed? Local tire distributors were not interested!

Roberts and Sonnet gathered together key people—environmental engineer Christina Toms, who volunteered to help obtain permits; Derek Cavasian, building contractor, who agreed to help with equipment to access and retrieve the tires; and Paul Jensen, Community Development Agency Director for San Rafael. They called themselves "Friends of Shoreline Park."

Through a chance encounter, the "Friends" found a sympathetic ear among MMWD staff who, with the help of a District welder, devised a special claw to secure the tires and provided a winch powered by a truck pull-line to retrieve tires from the mud and drag them to the shore. Cavasion cut lengths of plywood to create "walk boards" to access the tires. Nearby JHS Properties offered a staging area for retrieval and power-washing the mud-encased tires before they were sent for recycling.

### *Sensitive fish and wildlife*

Encroaching into wetland and bay habitats, even for a good cause, can damage sensitive resources. Therefore, the overall process required seven permits from federal and state agencies, among them the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board ("Water Board"), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration, Division of Fisheries, and an Encroachment Permit from City of San Rafael. Jensen facilitated a permit waiver from San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to extract materials from the Bay, and filed an exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Roberts and Jensen, together, obtained permission from all property owners along the shore to remove the tires from their respective lands.

Permitting agencies had several concerns—to minimize disturbance to the myriad organisms that inhabit Bay mudflats and sustain fish, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife; to avoid winter salmon migration season between November 30 and July 1 (work was limited to a five-month summer-fall window); and to prevent killing native oysters that had made the tires their home. Toms explained the oysters: "This shallow shoreline area of the bay is an ideal habitat for restoration of oysters native to the Bay. Oysters are a key organism in the bay's ecosystem, acting as a water quality filter. The tires are a convenient substrate." As a consequence, the project became basically an oyster salvage operation. Any oysters found on the tires had to be pried loose with a putty knife, collected in mesh bags, and taken to the near-by Rod & Gun Club to be placed in net bags hung in the water off the pier for continued growth. (*Marin IJ*, August 13, 2014.)

### *A model for mudflat cleanup*

With work limited to minus tides, a five-day work week, and a five-month summer-fall "window," the job took three and a half years from permits to conclusion in early 2015. Forty-three abandoned tires, some of them from large earthmoving equipment, plus three tire rims had been removed. It was an all-volunteer effort, led by the "Friends"



*Above: Workers use a winch to remove the tires from the mud. Below: Conservation Corps North Bay workers scrape thick Bay mud from a tire.*



*Roger Roberts*

and made possible by the support of partners. Tom Cronin, then MMWD's facilities and watershed manager, said: "It's an opportunity for us to come out and help the community!" The [North Bay Conservation Corps](#) helped in the latter stages of clean-up. [Marin Sanitary Service](#) picked up the tires for free storage and ultimate recycling at the next State-sponsored Amnesty Used Tire Recycling Program. Out of pocket expenses totaled \$500 to \$600.

The project may have begun by trial and error, but by the time it was over it had evolved in efficiency and now offers a useful model for similar volunteer projects around the Bay shoreline. With millions of discarded tires around us, many more are bound to end up on a mudflat!

# Crafting MCL's agricultural policy

by Sally Gale

"How do you develop a policy on a subject as complex and multi-faceted as agriculture in Marin County?"

This was a question the Land Use Committee, ably chaired by past MCL President Susan Stompe, considered at its regular meeting last February.

MCL was being drawn into discussions on the agricultural section of Marin's Local Coastal Plan—somewhat late in a process that began more than five years ago and is still pending approval by the Coastal Commission. MCL committees were also pondering how to comment on the Point Reyes National Seashore's upcoming [Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan \(RCMP\)](#), which will determine conditions for issuing extended leases to ranchers on the Seashore. The Draft RCMP and an accompanying Environmental Assessment (EA) are due out for public review sometime in the Spring of 2016. How to respond when many of the issues are new and not covered by MCL's past policies?

Marin Conservation League has a long history of supporting the agricultural community in Marin County, in practice if not by explicit policy. Stories about MCL past-President and past-legislator Peter Behr lobbying in Sacramento for higher milk prices to support the Marin dairy industry are the stuff of legend!

But MCL's involvement in agricultural issues has waxed and waned over the years, depending on competition for attention by other pressing environmental issues, such as traffic or water supply. MCL does have a set of adopted policies derived from the document "[Community Marin](#)".



Elise Suronen, Marin Resource Conservation District

*The Marin Resource Conservation District and students from Point Blue's Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) program, work on a creek restoration project at the Straus Home Ranch last year. 25 miles of creeks have been restored on Marin ranchland.*

However, those policies/recommendations have not always kept pace with trends in agriculture, such as increases in organic dairies even while the total number of operating dairies in Marin has declined or the increase in cheese production facilities, which "add value" to the basic milk product making it possible for small dairies to remain in business. Furthermore, there has been significant turnover on the MCL Board in intervening years, with diminishing knowledge of historic advocacy. The absence of clear policy made it difficult to respond as an organization to issues raised in the County's Local Coastal Plan. The forthcoming Pt. Reyes National Seashore RCMP and EA will also warrant MCL comments.



Dru Parker

*Marin's dairies have increased cheese production, which adds value to the basic milk product.*

## Information resources for study

There was no lack of interest by Land Use Committee members, who responded by forming an Agricultural Policy Subcommittee, with a view toward learning as much as they could about Marin agriculture and crafting a comprehensive policy. Eight participants have been chaired by rancher and MCL Board member Sally Gale, who lined up a schedule of talks by experts in various areas of Marin agriculture. Topics have ranged from an overview of past MCL agricultural policies and a study of the agriculture element of Community Marin, to a look at current agricultural practices and trends. Speakers from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board ("Water Board"), the University of California Ag Extension Office, the County Ag Commissioner's Office, the County Community Development Agency (keeper of the Marin Countywide Plan and development code), the Marin Resource Conservation District (MRCD), and the Marin Agricultural Land Trust all addressed members of the committee over a six month period. The subcommittee members also attended the Ag Land Use Committee's presentation on carbon sequestration on compost-enhanced grassland and carbon farming in general.

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## Climate *from page 1*

greenhouse gas emissions since targets were set in 2006. The Plan includes a range of goals and strategies designed to keep Marin moving toward California's long-term goal of reducing GHG emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. If adopted by the Board, the County's target of 30% below 1990 levels by 2020 for community-based emissions would be one of the most ambitious local jurisdiction reduction targets in California and the United States. This does not take into account the actions being taken by other local jurisdictions in the county, most of whom are also implementing their own Climate Action Plans and working together through the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership.

### *Time for Deep Green*

According to Armanino, the CAP Update predicts that about 60% of the GHG reduction planned for by 2020 will come from renewable energy sources and from increased energy efficiency. Most of that will be brought to us through Marin Clean Energy, which continues to face political and administrative challenges from big

*The single-most effective way for Marin residents to reduce GHG emissions is to switch to Deep Green*

utilities. At present, only about 2% of Marin residents subscribe to the 100% renewable Deep Green option. Deep Green costs a few dollars a month more than the 50% "light green" option that most MCE customers have, but its benefits are significant, including a strong financial incentive for the development of more local renewable power generation. Thus the single easiest and most productive action Marin residents could take to affect climate change by reducing GHG emissions would be to switch to Deep Green as their power source (MCE: 1-888-632-3674).

### *Opportunities on ag lands*

In response to recent research on the potential for sequestering carbon on agricultural lands, the revised CAP update added a new section on agriculture, which

includes reducing GHGs through methane capture at dairies and through carbon sequestration on rangelands. Although emissions from agriculture constitute only about 5% of GHG emissions countywide, including urban areas, the big upside to carbon farming is its demonstrated potential to capture significant amounts of carbon through enhanced management of rangeland soils. For instance, a 1% increase in the carbon stock in Marin rangelands by 2030 could result in emissions reduction that would exceed all other measures in the CAP Update.

### *Planning for adaption*

The CAP Update also contains a new chapter on Adaptation to climate change, in particular to sea level rise. Although the CAP Update is limited to the unincorporated areas of Marin, it calls for collaborating with other jurisdictions and groups throughout the County. Such efforts are in early stages at present, but awareness is growing that responding to sea level rise and the many other impacts of climate change will demand a unified approach.

The County recently received a \$250,000 Grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy to add to County funds to pay for the Marin Bay Waterfront Adaptation Vulnerability Evaluation (Marin Bay WAVE). This GIS-based shoreline vulnerability study will cross jurisdictional lines along the East Marin Bay shoreline. Chris Choo of Marin County Department of Public Works will coordinate the project, working with Caltrans, PG&E, and affected cities and stakeholders in mapping and evaluating assets vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding. Some near-term adaptation projects are included, but most of BayWAVE results will be rolled out to the public during 2016.

Recognizing that coordination among jurisdictions will be essential for effective climate action planning, Supervisor Damon Connolly presented a proposal at the October 16 CAWG meeting which outlines how he and fellow Supervisor Kate Sears plan to convene a series of broader conversations among cities, the County, special jurisdictions, and citizen groups.

## *New Director Profile*

### **Doug Karpa, Mill Valley**



Doug is an environmental and land use attorney with a Ph.D. in community and evolutionary biology from Harvard University and a

BS in biological sciences from Stanford University. Doug earned his J.D. with a specialization in environmental law from Berkeley Law School.

Doug has worked on a range of endangered species and conservation issues, including the establishment of major Habitat Conservation Plans, and a habitat conservation exchange in the Central Valley. He is currently the Legal Program Director at Turtle Island Restoration Network, where he is active in marine conservation issues. In addition to working with MCL, he serves as President on the Board of EarthTeam, an environmental service-learning non-profit working with underprivileged high school students in the East Bay and is on San Francisco Planning and Urban Research's (SPUR) Fossil Fuel Free Bay Area Task Force. He has also done pro bono work on education, marriage equality and Native American rights issues.

Doug was elected to the MCL Board along with fellow new Directors Heather Furmidge and Pat Nelson at MCL's annual meeting in April.

MCL's Climate Action Working Group has been working in the same direction to broaden the conversation about climate change, especially planning for sea level rise, and to encourage community groups to work together with officials. One example of coordination is the diversity of groups sponsoring the Time to Lead on Climate on November 9<sup>th</sup> at Dominican University (see Events [page 4](#)).



## San Rafael *from page 1*

### Transportation Corridors

Downtown San Rafael lies at the axis of two auto-dominated transportation corridors: Highway 101 North-South, and 2nd and 3rd Streets East-West. A key planning consideration will be how to avoid excess commuting into, and out of, a City that is already impacted by commuters travelling from one corridor to another, e.g., to and from San Anselmo and Fairfax, and onto or off Highway 101. Additional traffic and congestion during business hours will put additional strain on already busy intersections, local roads and the nearby Highway. Traffic studies and updated projections of realistic parking requirements are expected. How will the arrival of SMART service impact these travel corridors and the City?

### Bike/Ped corridors

Mitigation measures for transportation and traffic impacts could include separated pathways, pedestrian pockets, and safe intersections for non-motorized circulation as high priorities. Will planning for pedestrian and bicycle safety receive priority status, and can good design aid in the perception of the area as a harmonious whole? How can San Rafael make separated paths feasible, and what other mitigations might be considered?

### Scenic corridors

Views add to the perception of beauty of any city. In Marin, views of Mt. Tam, surrounding hills, the bay and the ocean have high value. In downtown San Rafael the height of proposed buildings and their cumulative mass will likely block some of the remaining views of surrounding hills and ridgelines, not only from within the PDA but also from outlying areas looking toward San Rafael, or across San Rafael toward Mt. Tam. Options for mitigation seem to be limited to treatments with streetscape, such as plantings. Are there options to retain views?



*Dru Parker*

*Will San Rafael's planning for pedestrian and bicycle safety receive priority status?*

### Riparian and flood corridors

Plans for development and growth are opportunities for San Rafael to take into consideration new projections for larger winter storm events, flood flow capacity and impacts on creek corridors. Tidally-influenced Mahon Creek, on the southern edge of the PDA, flows into the San Rafael Canal and out to the Bay, and conversely is a likely corridor for rising sea levels to enter the downtown station area. Growth planning provides San Rafael with opportunities to anticipate sea level rise vulnerabilities, improve flood control, and to restore riparian habitat. How might the vision in San Rafael's 1997 draft EIR and Conceptual Plan for Mahon Creek be incorporated during redevelopment? How might the Plan be updated in light of current sea level rise projections?

### Community Development

Good planning will be needed to prevent current development demands from exceeding the carrying capacity of existing City services, streets, and utilities, including projections of water demands and limited supply. A conscious, paced approach to growth would allow

impacts to be monitored over time. Decision criteria for development and redevelopment projects could be weighted for positive qualities, like the availability of City services, environmental amenities, energy conservation, and achievement of affordable housing goals. City Council approvals of current and future projects will have lasting impacts. The goals and criteria for such approvals are important and should be made clear.

The Community Development Agency of San Rafael regularly posts updates of projects on its website: [cityofsanrafael.org/commdev-home](http://cityofsanrafael.org/commdev-home).

Current and pending downtown projects listed include SMART's station area plan and multi-story structures for: BioMarin's sixth office building and third parking garage; Whistlestop's affordable senior housing complex application; and a large redevelopment project on the corner of 2nd and B Streets.

Marin Conservation League is monitoring these projects, and their likely cumulative impacts. Our advocacy letters and positions are posted on the MCL website at [marinconservationleague.org/advocacy](http://marinconservationleague.org/advocacy).



*Dru Parker*

*The BioMarin campus is rapidly expanding in downtown San Rafael.*

# Marin prepares for sea level rise on the Pacific Coast

by Bob Johnston

It is obvious that Marin County has two coasts and that both are vulnerable to anticipated sea level rise (SLR). A number of studies on the county's Bay shoreline have been reported in this Newsletter over the past several years, but little has been said about planning for Marin's other coast on the Pacific, which will experience not only rising sea level but also more intense storms, tidal extremes, and other shoreline hazards. That planning project, called **C-SMART** for "Collaboration: Sea-level Marin Adaptation Response Team," is nearing the half-way point and will run through April 30, 2016. Under the direction of Jack Liebster, Principal Planner with the County's Community Development Agency, the project has brought West Marin communities together with the National Park Service to better understand their vulnerability to SLR and consider their options for adapting.

A Vulnerability Assessment has been drafted and will be presented at a workshop November 14, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the Stinson Beach Community Center. The workshop will feature background on the study, briefing on the Vulnerability Assessment, and will illustrate a range of possible strategies for adapting to SLR, such as retreat and relocate, new floodable

development, elevating buildings and roadways, Coastal Commission regulations, tide gates and seawalls, pumps, beach maintenance, and restoring wetlands. The Vulnerability Assessment provides a detailed description of which properties will be flooded, under various assumptions about SLR and storm surges. Vulnerable areas are categorized into short-, medium-, and long-term. The short-term areas, for example, include Stinson Beach west of Shoreline Highway, parts of Shoreline Highway, low-lying areas in Bolinas, the East Shore of Tomales Bay, and the Dillon Beach Resort.

The areas subject to flooding were identified using **Our Coast—Our Future** (OCOF) interactive computer software that can be run by anyone (<http://data.prbo.org/apps/ocof/index.php?page=flood-map>). The Assessment also identifies specific resources in each community and lists alternative adaptation options for discussion in the workshop. Additional meetings will be scheduled with community organizations in other areas of West Marin (see [marinplr.org](http://marinplr.org), to find the documents completed so far and scheduled meetings).

The Assessment allows residents to identify which parcels are vulnerable, in each community and under each of five representative scenarios for various levels of flooding. For example, in the worst scenario 918 residential and 46 commercial parcels could be flooded. Moreover, more than 1,300 parcels will be subject

to some sort of damage, if the utilities and roads serving them are included. (This does not account for hundreds of homes on higher ground that could be isolated and without water during flooding episodes.) Furthermore, the Assessment classifies levels of damage to structures according to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) categories and tabulates the assessed values of these properties.

Detailed maps and tabulations will be on display at the workshop showing anticipated damage to utilities, roads,



photo courtesy County of Marin/Obherly 2013

*The town of Inverness, on the Tomales Bay shoreline, is vulnerable to rising sea levels.*

working lands, recreation areas, historical and archeological resources, emergency services, and natural resources. This report is very informative, especially for businesses or residents who live or own property in one of these vulnerable areas.

Much of the preliminary work in the Vulnerability Assessment is the result of earlier workshops held in various communities in West Marin, in which participants identified what they love about their community, assets that may be vulnerable to SLR and flooding, and which assets have experienced flooding already. These meetings were also used to identify potential policies and actions that could be taken to avoid or mitigate SLR damage. The C-SMART program's continuous public outreach is proving to be highly effective in engaging citizens in planning for their own future.

*Bob Johnston is an MCL Director and a member of the C-SMART Stakeholder Advisory Committee*



photo courtesy County of Marin/Kimmoor 2012

*Crashing waves inundate the end of Brighton Ave. in Bolinas.*

## Ag Policy *from page 7*

Topics as diverse as grazing waivers (permits from the Water Board to prevent pollutants above a certain threshold from entering water bodies), diversification (expanding traditional agriculture into new crops or types of livestock, educational tours, farm stands, etc., to augment farm income), vertical integration (engaging in more than one step in a supply chain, such as feed production, poultry husbandry, egg production), generational succession planning, noxious weed control, pasture management, creek restoration, organic

### *50% of Marin's land area is agricultural*

certification and methane digestion to produce electricity were discussed. Participants learned that roughly 50% of Marin's land area is in agriculture and that almost 50,000 acres are protected by MALT conservation easements. The MRCD reported that 25 miles of creeks have been restored on Marin ranchland. In total, ranchlands cover about 167,000 acres of Marin's land area.

Committee members were determined to hear all presentations before drafting policy. It was a luxury to sit back and learn! The Land Use Committee kept the MCL Board informed of progress and process. After numerous committee reviews and revisions, a draft policy was discussed and further refined by the Board at its October 20 meeting. The Board expects to take action on the Agricultural Policy on November 17. The intent is to guide the MCL President and Board in developing responses to issues as they arise in the complex but very interesting subject of agriculture in Marin.

Such is the systematic method that MCL takes in adopting its guiding policies!



### *MCL Business Member Profile*

## **Kamman Hydrology & Engineering, Inc.**

by Linda Novy

Engineers Greg and Rachel Kamman are doing what they love: protecting, enhancing and restoring natural resources. These water resource consultants bring hydrology, geology and engineering to the management of natural resources. Their company, Kamman Hydrology and Engineering, Inc. (KHE), was founded in 1996 by Greg. Rachel joined the company in 1998. Their work in Marin watersheds involves analyzing the historical and future condition of water features, including anticipated sea level rise – highly relevant services in an era of climate change and shifting coastal and watershed processes. KHE's recent Bay area projects include the Winter Salmonid Habitat Restoration in Lagunitas Creek, the Tennessee Hollow Watershed Restoration Project for the Presidio Trust, and the Giacomini Wetland Restoration Planning and Design, for which they won the Partners in Conservation Award from the Department of the Interior in 2009. The [KHE website](#) has a complete list of their work.

To support wise land and water resource management, KHE provides clients with an integrated understanding of physical processes, ecological resources, land use, and infrastructure. KHE's projects are usually long term. Rachel said, "Natural resource enhancement requires long and hard collaborative work, but transforming and protecting our lands and the plant and animal communities they support is rewarding work! It commonly takes 5-10 years to complete the monitoring, site assessment, design, permitting, and construction of large scale restoration projects." For example,



they have been working closely with the San Francisco Presidio Trust over the last 15 years to "daylight" creeks (open them to daylight from culverts). Visible to the northeast from the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue flyover, Dragonfly Creek is now thriving!

KHE is based in San Rafael and takes its community role seriously. With three children of their own, the Kammans support classroom and outdoor education programs. They also engage in a wide range of community and regional planning and support many watershed and creek organizations in the Bay area, including the Gallinas Watershed Council and the Miller Creek Watershed Stewards. KHE also has worked closely with Point Blue's STRAW Project (formerly The Bay Institute's Project), Audubon Canyon Ranch, Point Reyes National Seashore Association, Golden Gate Parks Conservancy, and the list goes on!

It's a natural that a company with such a significant role in environmental protection would be Business Members of the Marin Conservation League. When we asked Rachel why they joined MCL in 2012, she said: "What took us so long?" When she and Greg became familiar with MCL's work in integrating land use and resource protection, they wanted to join. Rachel Kamman, PE, and Greg Kamman, PG, PHG, are valuable resources to the Bay Area and to Marin County. We salute them for their passion, integrity, and brilliance. And we appreciate their business membership in MCL!

**MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE  
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*Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at the MCL office and are open to the public.*

**Staff**

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Shannon Doherty, Novato  
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**Issue Committee Meeting Schedule  
(subject to change—check website)**

*Land Use and Transportation:*

1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of the month, 9:00 AM—Noon

*Parks and Open Space:*

2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. of the month, 3:00—5:00 PM

*Invasive Plant Subcommittee of POS:*

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. of the month, 3:00—5:00 PM

*Climate Action Working Group:* 3<sup>rd</sup> Fri. of the month, 9:00 AM—12:00 PM

*Agricultural Land Use: meets quarterly;  
Water and Watersheds, North Marin Unit:  
Check website for times and locations*

Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance Marin County's natural assets. MCL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All contributions and memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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**You're invited!**

## Marin Conservation League's 2015 Holiday Celebration

**Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>  
4 — 7 pm**

**175 N. Redwood Drive  
San Rafael**

**Please RSVP to 415-485-6257 or [marinconservationleague.org/events](http://marinconservationleague.org/events).**

**This party is free to all members, their friends and family.**