



## Point Reyes National Seashore: Superintendent Kenkel speaks to the present and envisions the future

**I**n November 2020, the National Park Service (NPS) welcomed Craig Kenkel as the new Superintendent of Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS). For Kenkel, this meant leaving his post as superintendent of Ohio's Cuyahoga Valley National Park, where he had served since 2014, and returning to the Bay Area. January marked Kenkel's first anniversary. In early March, we interviewed him about park planning, environmental monitoring, tribal agreements, and what it's like managing a park during active litigation. The information shared below is publicly available. The following is a summary of our conversation.

**Q:** Tell us about your background and your career path with the NPS. Did you always hope to become a superintendent?

I found NPS by accident. I was pursuing a degree in architecture at Iowa State, and I needed a summer away from the family farm. [Farming has been in the Kenkel family for five generations.] A student intern position

*Kenkel interview cont. p. 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Yes on A .....	p 3
MCL Annual Mtg wrap-up .....	p 6
Building electrification .....	p 8
Env. history by John Hart.....	p 9
In memoriam: Doug Wilson.....	p 11
2022 MCL Env. Awardees!.....	p 12



*Nona Dennis with MCOSD board, staff and friends on March 8, 2022*

Photo Courtesy County of Marin

## Marin County Parks and Open Space District's Board and Staff commend and thank Nona Dennis

by Katie Rice,  
Marin County Parks and Open Space District Board President

**O**n Tuesday, March 8th, our board recognized and honored Nona Dennis. Our excuse was her retirement as Chair of the MCL Parks and Open Space Committee — to which our formal resolution was framed. But the occasion was also an opportunity for our Board and Marin Parks' staff to personally thank Nona and to reflect on her impact on and import to Marin County Parks and Open Space District's projects, policy and on the people who are charged with stewarding our public open space.

Several people spoke that day, lauding Nona not only for her professional expertise and various contributions, but also in admiration and appreciation for Nona the person. Kind, welcoming, inclusive, patient, eloquent ... collaborator, communicator, convenor — these and many other words came from all corners of the chambers as board members, staff, and members of the public reflected on what Nona Dennis has meant to us professionally and personally.

Here is an excerpt from my remarks that day:

*Nona, your input, your insight, the influence that you have had on policy, and projects, and on the people who are charged with the stewardship of our natural environment and open space lands, is indelible and baked into this county and into us.*

*I am thinking about some of the seminal documents — the Road and Trail Management Plan, the Vegetation Management Plan, the 2007 Countywide Plan. Countless, voluminous EIR's — some programmatic, some project specific — you provided testimony on. (You may be the only person who read all the pages.) I can see you standing at the back of the chambers waiting patiently in line to speak and, regardless of the level of tension or controversy, we could count on you to be a voice of reason — calm, objective, usually within time limits.*

*And when you speak, we listen, carefully. Everyone listens.*

*Nona Dennis, cont. p. 10*



## President's Message

# What would happen to conservation in Marin if Measure A were not extended?

Joni Mitchell had conservation on her mind when she wrote, "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone". Well, in this case we do know what we've got—and would lose if Measure A does not pass.

Pre-Measure A days often meant peeling paint, toilets and plumbing that didn't quite work right, restrooms that were not clean enough, too much trash, too little trail maintenance, and too few rangers to protect habitat and deputies to protect people.

For County Parks, the recipient of 2/3 of the funding, returning to pre-Measure A days would mean no natural resources team of biologists and ecologists or over 45 seasonal staff to work on projects—everything from early detection/rapid response for invasive species; to wildlife biology surveys for nesting birds; to studies on specific threatened species; to designing, building and maintaining new trails; to restoring habitat and reworking fuel management projects in ways that reduce negative

impacts on native vegetation; and more. Project research, planning, implementing, and monitoring—gone. Same impact on hundreds of park and recreation projects for cities, towns, and special districts throughout Marin.

In fact, without Measure A renewal, conservation would be worse off than in pre-Measure A days because now there are greater demands on park staff and budgets for vegetation management to reduce wildfire risk and to mitigate the impacts on native biodiversity from more park users. And worsening heat and drought, due to climate change, increase the need to acquire additional land connecting open spaces, protect agriculture from development, and improve habitat areas on private and public land in order to enable many native species to improve their chances to survive, including by migrating.

Happily, what we've got won't be gone if we all work hard to ensure passage of Measure A. The future of conservation in Marin depends on it.

An In Memoriam in this issue pays tribute to Doug Wilson, past Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) chair, who died in February. Doug remained active in MCL's advocacy work even as his cancer prognosis and symptoms worsened. While saddened by his death, I was also inspired that he succeeded in dying the way he wanted to live: with vigor and grace. We will miss him.

Finally, I want to thank California Fish and Wildlife's Madeline Drake, for her engaging presentation at our Annual Meeting last month covering the State's strategies to implement its 30x30 conservation initiative and to congratulate this year's environmental awardees for the work they do and the outcomes they've had.

Robert Miller

## PRNS Supervisor Kenkel interview from p. 1

with the NPS Denver Service Center (DSC) – a then 1000-person office of architecture, design, engineering, and planning – sent me to Sitka National Park and Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Alaska to do field work on historic preservation. That experience set the hook in me to be a NPS employee.

**Q:** *What attracted you to the job at Point Reyes?*

Point Reyes has always been one of my top five favorite parks in the national system. It's a large working landscape surrounded by an amazing rugged coastline. It's different because of the combination of human activities in the Park. Point Reyes is part of the daily lives of people who live and work in, or next to, the park. Also, 2.3 million visitors per year drop in for a vacation or a recreational opportunity and then go home. A lot of parks have park and

concession employees living there; it's different when people living and working in a park are not part of providing a visitor experience.

I particularly enjoy living near a "wild/urban edge." The Bay Area is an amazing metropolitan area for culture, history, entertainment, food, diversity. And yet within half an hour, you can be at a wild edge, whether it's at Point Reyes or another park. I think people really respond, engage, and frankly care more about these types of parks.

**Q:** *PRNS is also a unique composition of different land designations, including the 30,000 acres of the Philip Burton Wilderness. What are the challenges this presents for NPS – the "active management" of resources on about 75 percent of the park, in contrast with the more restricted "passive management" provisions in the Wilderness Act?*

Our wilderness is different than other wildernesses. It's not a huge block of acreage. And it's right next to a working agricultural landscape. Regulations and Park Service policy prescribe how we manage different land designations in a park. A "wilderness" designation means minimum development and no mechanical devices or infrastructure that would detract from a true wilderness experience – from solitude, peace, and quiet. You're in nature as restored or preserved or pristine as we can make that wilderness experience be. The question for the Philip Burton Wilderness is: are we achieving that kind of qualitative experience for a visitor? Here, the trails used to be ranch roads, and you enter the wilderness through a pastoral experience. And the wilderness receives lots of visitation!

*Kenkel interview cont. p. 4*

## Vote YES – Renew Measure A in 2022!

On June 7, voters will have the opportunity to renew the widely popular Measure A -- the ¼ cent sales tax measure passed in 2012 that has enabled the County to protect, maintain, and improve its 34 open space preserves, four regional parks and three-dozen other parks and outdoor facilities, and a system of paved multipurpose pathways; support local and special district parks and recreation programs throughout the county; and preserve farmlands and the rural culture that are Marin's distinctive heritage.

From 2013 to the present, we have witnessed Measure A's major accomplishments plus thousands of less obvious maintenance and farmland conservation activities, all benefitting the natural environment and scenic and recreational and productive resources of Marin's natural and working lands, as well as the health of Marin's citizens.

Who in the County has not biked, jogged, or walked the Sausalito-Mill Valley multiuse path, sought the cool solitude of Roy's Redwoods on a warm day, spent a morning biking with kids on the family-friendly trails of Rush Creek Preserve, explored the botanical rarities of Ring Mountain, crossed the former "plunge" on Old Railroad Grade in Fairfax on a new bridge, launched a kayak at McNears Beach, checked out the new "flowy" trail on Ponti Ridge on a mountain bike, hiked the Deer Island loop, or road-biked the bucolic by-ways of West Marin farmland? And these don't include the dozens of experiences that have brought new people to our parks, removed barriers and afforded accessibility to many, and supported local recreation programs in every community and special district in the county.

All these – and many more – park and open space experiences have benefited from Measure A funds since its passage in 2012. MCL continues to advocate for renewing allocations in the expiring Measure A program, but with significant adjustments to the funding plan:

- **65% to County parks and open space preserves.**  
In addition to 65 percent of that amount allocated to park and open space improvements, like the examples

above, and maintenance and interpretive programs, and 10 percent set aside to acquiring long-targeted lands like Bowman Canyon, 25 percent is committed to protecting communities from threat of wildfire in partnership with Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA), especially to reduce wildfire fuels in the interface between open space preserves and residential neighborhoods.

- **20% to steward farmlands.**

The overarching intent of this Measure A allocation is to sustain the ecological, public, and scenic benefits that accrue from healthy farmlands, such as connected wildlife habitats, wildfire risk protection, carbon sequestration and other soil-water management, clean

air, local food security, and others. To fulfill this intent, the allocation is divided into three parts: Twenty percent will go to Marin Resource Conservation District, matching outside grants to assist all willing farmers in restoring habitats and implementing beneficial best practices such as those cited above; another 30 percent will go to local community or other on-farm programs, such as community gardens, of which engage people in stewarding working lands; and the remaining 50 percent will go to easement acquisition, the only way to ensure the long-term preservation of Marin's farmlands in the face of rising land costs and other threats.

- **15% to cities and special districts.**

This allocation assures that every resident and every community has an opportunity to support local environmental and recreational priorities.

As one supervisor observed in 2012, when the first Measure A went to the ballot: "There is something here for everyone"! That promise has been fulfilled over the past ten years. One could add that Measure A has benefited the whole county as well. Both promises still apply in 2022! For more on Measure, see Mar – Apr 2022 newsletter.



## Celebrate Marin County Open Space District's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Senior Stroll through Conservation History!

Join Marin County Parks and MCL's Nona Dennis for a SENIOR STROLL THROUGH CONSERVATION HISTORY in the beautiful Camino Alto Preserves along the Escalon Fire Road on **Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 10 – 11:30 a.m.**

Nona will share the history of the area known as Northridge. In 1969, MCL initiated a 25-year campaign to acquire lands and parcels in Mill Valley, Corte Madera,

Larkspur and Kent Woodlands to make up the area that now encompasses four Marin County Open Space Preserves. The effort involved thousands of volunteers and led to a successful campaign that resulted in the formation of the Marin County Open Space District in 1972. For more information, click [here](#), or contact [Naturalist Shannon](#).





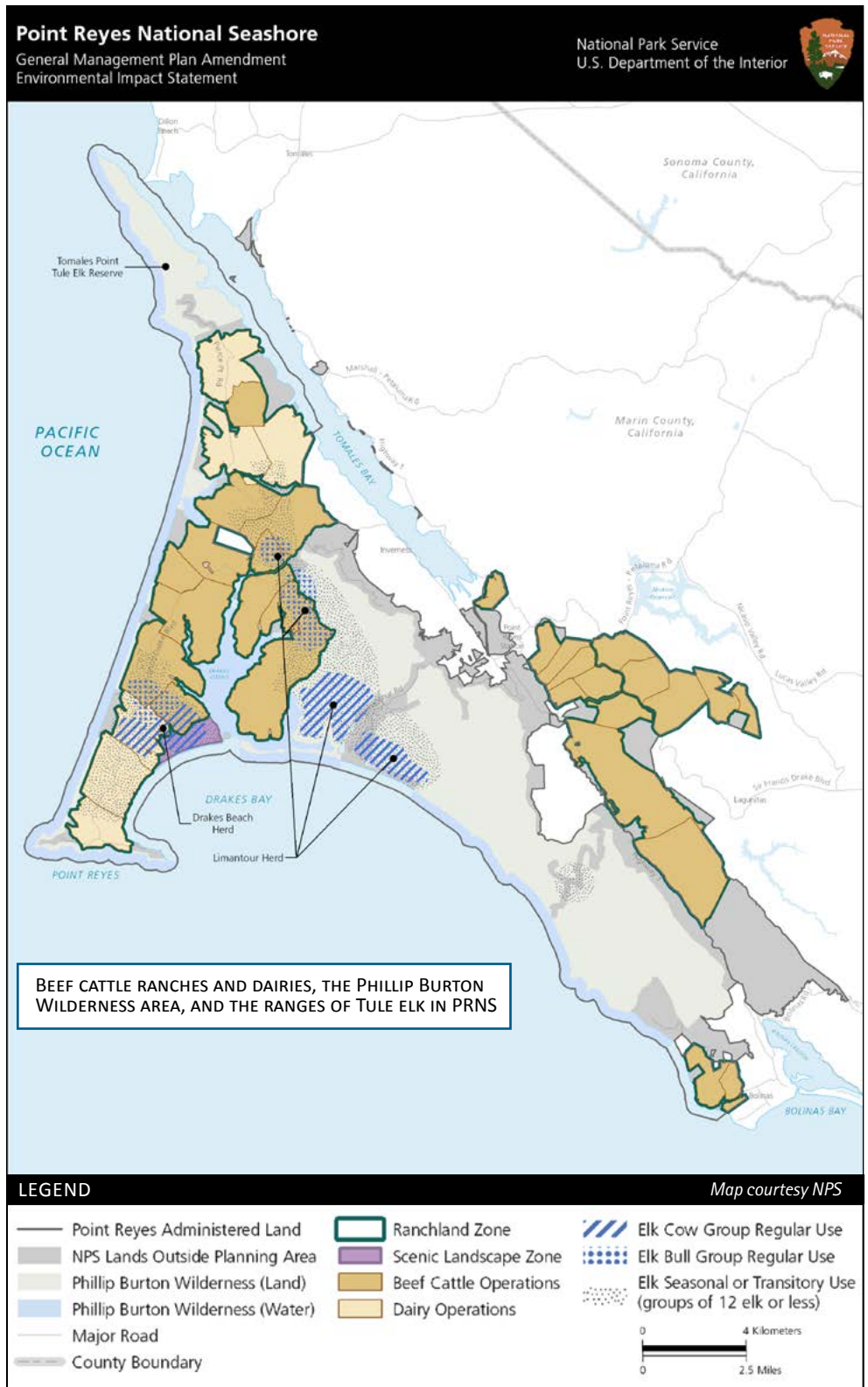
## Kenkel Interview from p. 2

Because of extreme drought conditions, last year we made the decision to provide water to the tule elk at Tomales Point. We imposed upon the wilderness condition by bringing in temporary infrastructure — tanks, troughs, and pipes. This is an example where land designations become challenging. Even though it's designated wilderness, it's an altered landscape, not a pristine ecosystem. Human impact has altered ecosystems globally. We're actively managing Point Reyes' ecosystem, trying to repair it and to reach the desired condition of a balanced ecosystem. There's always tension when we do that, especially when people are living and working in the ecosystem too.

**Q:** Can you give us an update on the General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA)? Has NPS begun implementing it? Will there be opportunities for public comment such as on the Ranch Operating Agreements? How can the public stay informed on testing for water quality?

As you know, a new lawsuit was filed in January against the GMPA. That outcome remains to be seen. The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in September [2021]. That was when the course was set. We've continued monitoring water quality, expanding it to include coastal watersheds, to meet Coastal Commission conditions. We're continuing to assess existing infrastructure and current operations on the ranches, and we've begun conversations with the ranchers about their future on the ranches at the Seashore. The leases will be standardized, but the ranch operating agreements (ROAs) will be written specifically per ranch. Each agreement between rancher and the National Park Service will detail what's expected from them, how they will operate, what kind of commitments the Park Service and the rancher will make for maintaining and improving infrastructure to reach the desired resource conditions as set forth in the ROD and the GMPA. It's not a fast and easy process. Nor can we control external forces — dairy and beef markets, climate change, or the next generation's interest in ranching as an occupation.

But we're moving forward. During the Coastal Commission Consistency Determination hearing in 2021, we agreed to their conditions, including transparent ROAs, and we committed to providing the Commission with status reports on how ranching is affecting resources



and achieving the goals and objectives of the GMPA. I see the Park Service providing annual reports, most likely on our website. The ROAs should also be public documents, and we can share water quality and other testing results online.

**Q:** The GMPA ROD provides for managing the Drakes Beach and Limantour free-range elk herds. What are the NPS plans for updating the 1998 Tule Elk Management Plan for the Tomales Point herd?

*Kenkel interview cont. next page*

## Kenkel Interview *from previous page*

In December, I announced a new planning effort for Tomales Point and the tule elk herd that live there. Climate change and extreme drought are presenting us with unprecedented conditions. It's an important time to evaluate the designated wilderness, the experiences we're creating for park visitors, the infrastructure that's in place, and what should stay and what should go. Then we'll determine options for managing the tule elk at Tomales Point.

This process is similar to the one for the GMPA for ranching. We'll look at four statutory requirements regarding visitor capacity, development to support visitor experience, the need to consider boundary changes, and resource management for Tomales Point. Three of those requirements will be addressed programmatically. The fourth, the resource management requirement, will require digging deeper as we explore management alternatives for the tule elk. Following a year of pre-planning, we will likely announce our Notice of Intent to do a National Environmental Policy Act environmental impact statement (EIS), in March 2023. [Public comments regarding the scope of the plan and issues to be addressed are due May 9th.]

**Q:** Last August, the Park Service and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria announced a General Agreement for Government-to-Government Partnership. Will you describe this agreement and share examples of how you'll collaborate in the management of the park and restoration of Kule Loklo?

Some of my most enjoyable work in the past year has been formalizing the Park's relationship with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. Our conversation deepens and broadens as it continues. I'm part of the federal government; we're a bureaucracy. They're a tribal nation. Our cultures are very different. Yet, there is synergy in how we think about the Seashore and their ancestral homelands. We're both in what I call "the forever business." We will be incorporating tribal ecological knowledge into resource management throughout the park, especially for tule elk and indigenous resources.

The tribe has committed to rebuilding Kule Loklo. We're working with the tribe to determine what the rebuilding process will be, including how we engage the community to envision Kule Loklo as a place, and how it will



Photo: Larry Scheibel

*Tule elk on Tomales Point*

be used. We know that the larger indigenous community, as well as others, hold Kule Loklo close. We want to listen to all, to consider their ideas. The tribe will be the convener of those conversations. Understanding the collective experience is important as we begin co-management of their ancestral home, now and forward.

**Q:** You began your position at PRNS as presidential administrations were transitioning. Point Reyes has lost natural resources management staff over several years, and yet you face many new natural resource requirements in both the GMPA and Tomales Point planning. What are your highest priorities for the next few years?

My highest priority is to fill positions. You're right, the Park's management team for natural and cultural resources isn't what it used to be. We have great people working at the Seashore, but we don't have enough. That's true of many National Parks. In addition, many of the Seashore's current leadership team, including myself, have been at Point Reyes for four years or less.

This year we will be recruiting for the permanent position of Resource Management Chief. I'm also looking to hire a Deputy Superintendent with business management experience. We need business acumen for managing the Park. The Great American Outdoors Act [Feb 2021] provides funding for deferred maintenance of visitor infrastructure: roads, bridges, restrooms, and campgrounds, for example. But park operational funds have

remained relatively flat, and it costs more to run a park than it did 20 years ago. We can't rely solely on federal funding. We need to think innovatively and entrepreneurially in seeking nonfederal funding and partnering with others.

We're part of a collaborative of eleven national park units known as the San Francisco Bay Network that works together for resource inventory and monitoring, employee safety and wellness, and other objectives. We're looking to expand the Pacific Coast Science and Learning Center programs, which have predominantly focused on Point Reyes, to support science and learning across more units of the SF Bay Network. As we determine the goals and objectives of the programs, there will be staffing decisions too.

And we have a strong relationship with UC Berkeley at the Point Reyes Field Station, [which supports research and student education at the Hagmaier Ranch House in Olema Valley], and with the Tomales Bay Marine Field Station, where former Point Reyes Superintendent Don Neubacher has been rehabilitating buildings at the Sacramento Landing to provide new housing for interns. It will increase capacity for own research as well as that by others. Everyone is excited and interested in using it.

**Q:** Any last thoughts you'd like to share?

Well, our staff is really hungry to embark on a strategic plan for the Park, to create a vision and a future that taps into their knowledge, experiences, and passion for the Seashore and the Park Service. For so long, much of our major park planning has been controversial and involved litigation. A majority of park staff have carried on with day-to-day operations while a few have worked on those big plans. From past experience, I know there is staff creativity and energy waiting for an opportunity to be engaged.

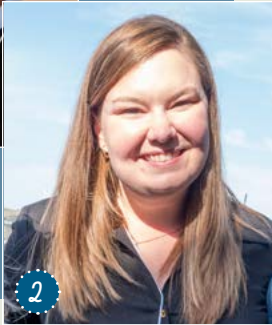
During my previous six years at Cuyahoga Valley, we developed a vision and strategic plan that focused on the Cuyahoga River for the first time in the Park's history. And because the entire river and its watershed go beyond park boundaries, we partnered with many others to promote stewardship and recreation of the Cuyahoga. Partners removed the one remaining dam that prevented the river from being free flowing through the national park and reaching



# Marin Conservation League 2022 ANNUAL MEETING & RECEPTION

*What was it like to see one another again at the Marin Conservation League Annual Meeting, Friday, April 29? And not boxed in by Zoom on a screen?*

*MCL's Annual Dinner Meetings are always popular affairs – opportunities to come together, share stories, laugh or commiserate, and celebrate those who have carried out extraordinary deeds to conserve our environment. We generally leave with our spirits uplifted!*





# A Jubilant Reunion at the Bay Model, Sausalito

by Nona Dennis

*This year's meeting was the same, but more so, because we hadn't seen each other in two years!*

*The faces you see here affirm that the expectation was met: great pleasure at connecting again, a lifting of spirits by celebrating our environmental heroes, and inspiration from a leader of the State's notable journey to protect 30% of California's precious lands and coastal waters by 2030! Altogether a memorable evening!*



Annual meeting flowers from Susan Stompe's garden

- 1 David Lewis, Annual Meeting emcee
- 2 Madeline Drake, CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife, Annual Meeting Guest Speaker
- 3 Bonnie Marks and Bob Miller, MCL president
- 4 Vicki Nichols, Annual Meeting Event Chair with Mike Gale
- 5 Betsy Bikle
- 6 Nancy Scolari
- 7 Arlin Weinberger
- 8 Sarah Phillips and Chris Choo
- 9 Meryl Sundove and Roger Harris
- 10 Marta Batres and Marta Tovar
- 11 Paul da Silva and Supervisor Damon Connolly
- 12 Greg Brockbank
- 13 Mary Sackett, Dee and Rick Fraites
- 14 Susan Stompe and Kathy Lowrey
- 15 Judy Teichman and Jean Berensmeier
- 16 Clint and Madeline Kellner with Mike Gale
- 17 Gary Oates, Richard Jensen and Paul Jensen
- 18 Martha Richter Smith and Jeff Stump
- 19 Larry Minikes, Terri Thomas, and Sharon Farrell
- 20 Kate Sears and Nona Dennis

Photos by MCL board members  
Madeline Kellner and Roger Harris

## Building Electrification and why it's important

*A report on recent presentations to MCL's Climate Action Working Group (CAWG)*

by Kate Powers

It's becoming ever more clear that buildings are having an outsized impact on global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Most buildings run on multiple fuels – electricity to power lights, refrigerators, electronic devices; and fossil fuels, such as natural gas (methane), primarily to power furnaces and water heaters. It's the use of natural gas in buildings that is responsible for about one quarter of Marin's GHG emissions. Building electrification is the shift away from fossil fuels combustion toward the use of clean electricity for space and water heating, as well as for appliances.

A transition to all-electric buildings will not only reduce harmful climate impacts, but it will improve indoor air quality and have health benefits such as reducing asthma rates over a building's life span. Building electrification plays an important role in fulfilling goals to reduce GHG emissions in local climate action plans and in moving forward on the path to a clean energy future.

### High-efficiency heat pumps are fueling the shift

Building electrification is a viable alternative because fossil fuel-powered appliances and equipment already have electric substitutes. High-efficiency electric heat pumps are the enabling technology for space and water heaters – they are three to five times more energy-efficient than their natural gas counterparts. Unlike conventional furnaces, which burn fuel to produce heat, heat pumps use electricity to transfer thermal energy between spaces, sending heat where it's needed, or removing it from where it's not. They offer a two-for-one

benefit: heating and air conditioning from the same equipment.

Future new homes built with electric heat pumps, a tightly insulated building envelope, and rooftop solar will have smaller energy demands, be energy efficient, and will substantially decrease carbon emissions. Electric heat pump space and water heaters can also be installed in existing homes and are the clear choice to reduce greenhouse gas emissions when old gas-fueled units need replacement.

### The IPCC report: The need to accelerate

We know that global warming is caused mostly by human activity, primarily from burning fossil fuels, and that a large percentage of GHG emissions comes from the building sector, not only in Marin, but nationwide. We also know that impacts from growing climate change are affecting weather patterns, increasing environmental hazards, harming biodiversity, and increasing economic and human hardship, especially for the world's most vulnerable. The IPCC's recently released Climate Change Mitigation Report (April 4, 2022) emphasized the need to accelerate climate actions if we are to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

The 2022 IPCC report is the latest of three. It reports that with every fraction of a degree of global warming, climate change impacts will intensify, and it calculated that the world must peak GHG emissions within the next three years to preserve chances of meeting the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F) target. Exceeding that threshold, even temporarily,

will result in more severe and often irreversible climate impacts, and create a greater need for carbon removal, making early emissions reductions to avoid overshoot critical.

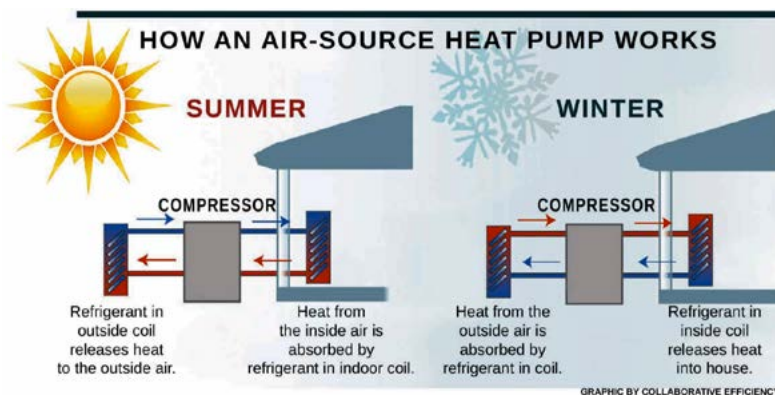
According to the IPCC, we must cut emissions by

half by 2030. Transformations across all major sectors are needed. Among the report's recommended actions for mitigation are incentivizing green buildings, electric heating, and more efficient appliances and lighting; rapidly retrofitting older buildings with improved technologies; incorporating those technologies in all new construction projects; and scaling up clean energy. Transitioning to lower emission lifestyles can make an enormous difference. The time to influence policymakers and to take personal action is now.

### Updating Marin's Green Building Codes

Every three years the California Energy Commission (CEC) updates the state's Energy Code. In August 2021, the CEC adopted the 2022 Energy Code. In December, it was approved by the California Building Standards Commission for inclusion into the [California Building Standards Code](#) effective January 1, 2023. In summary, the new State standards improve upon standards and guidance for electric heat pump technology, electric-ready requirements, solar photovoltaics + battery storage, and indoor air quality. All jurisdictions must adopt the State's building standards as a minimum. Cities and counties may alternatively choose to adopt local building codes that "reach" beyond the state minimum.

Currently, all twelve of Marin's jurisdictions are jointly working to develop a model reach code ordinance that would exceed the State building standards. The focus of the Green Building reach code is a ramping down of the use of natural gas in buildings. The model reach code will require new residences to be all-electric, and remodels to meet a target energy score that allows for a range of options that could favor electric heat pump space and water heaters as long as they are cost-effective. The County is also expanding its incentives and rebates programs, such as Electrify Marin that connects residences and businesses to State, regional and local financial incentives should owners decide to voluntarily replace gas-fueled space and water heaters with electric heat pump models when they reach the end of their useful lives.



*Building Electrification, cont next page*



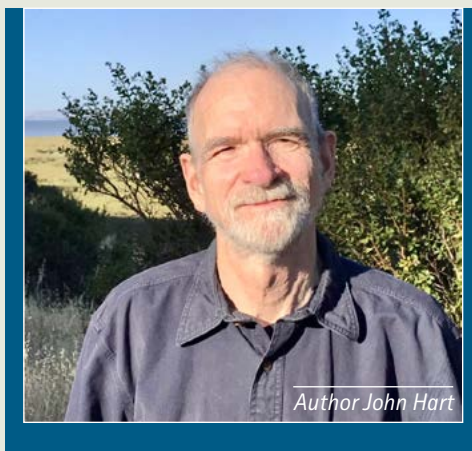
## An Environmental History of Marin County: A noteworthy book project takes off

by Nona Dennis

**M**arin Conservation League is proud to help initiate a wide-ranging environmental history of Marin County, a multi-year project that is being written by well-known local historian, nature writer, mountaineer, and poet John Hart.

Marin is not lacking in accounts of its history! A bibliographic search yields dozens of major histories and thousands of references to the many facets that make up a rich tapestry of people and their cultures spread over millennia and gradually transforming the county in recent centuries. Coast Miwok, Russian fur traders, Spanish missions, Mexican ranchos, railroads, Gold Rush explorers, dairies, small settlements expanding with the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge into towns and cities – all of these have occupied a small peninsula at the edge of the continent, marked by geologically complex mountains and ridges and biologically diverse redwood forests, oak savannas, coastal prairie, inland valleys, tidal flats, and working rangelands. It is a rich history, but it is currently in many pieces, not under one cover.

John Hart has been covering the Marin environmental and planning scene since 1970 – in major books and hundreds of published articles and essays that probe every aspect of the natural world and its intersection with people and their cultures, economies, laws, and politics. His larger writing portfolio extends well beyond Marin, enriching his understanding of



Author John Hart

Marin's context – the environment of California and San Francisco Bay-Delta Region. His unique insights, however, are those that enlighten the human dimension of resource conservation that distinguishes Marin.

Many of John's previous works will serve as drafts or studies for a broader, more comprehensive and permanently useful telling of the Marin environmental story, bringing together many threads – expanding on some – to form a "hefty" volume that will be both engaging and scholarly.

John has outlined the organization of the book as chronological, beginning with the county's distinctive natural setting, itself in an evolving, not a timeless or pristine state, and the era before European colonization. Each

of about a dozen chapters will treat a specific period. After 1930, the rhythm will be approximately by decade. Thematic topics such as people, land use patterns, native ecosystems as well as invasive biota, agriculture and aquaculture, park preservation, resource consumption and disposal, air and water quality, and regional connections will cycle through the chronology.

Without losing its focus on environmental history, the account will give due place to the fortunes of the Miwoks, Chinese immigrants, Italian-Swiss and Azorean Portuguese dairy families, the World War II Black labor force, and post-War Black, Latinx, and other communities that face ethnic, linguistic, or economic barriers.

It will conclude with challenges: How do Marin's small population, elite image, and dearth of affordable housing relate to its long-established environmental policies? And how can one small county confront problems of worldwide scope, including sea level rise, drought and wildfire, and the spread of exotic species and other ecosystem stresses?

The John Hart book project is being undertaken under the fiscal sponsorship of MarinLink, with MCL's enthusiastic encouragement and advisory assistance. For a more detailed outline of content and opportunities for funding assistance, go to [johnhart.com](http://johnhart.com) and click on the link in the topmost post. 🌱

## Building Electrification *from previous page*

The joint effort is being led by the County of Marin, San Rafael, San Anselmo, and Marin Clean Energy (MCE) with the goal of developing and simultaneously adopting a consistent reach code countywide. The joint effort provides smaller jurisdictions an opportunity to leverage County, regional, and State staff and resources. [Fairfax has already adopted an all-electric ordinance for new construction.] Having consistent Green Building reach codes across jurisdictions would make it easier for contractors and enforcement to comply. If adopted, the reach codes will amend each jurisdiction's local building requirements and, in concert with the State's standards, would go into effect January 1, 2023.

### Planning for development: a unique opportunity to make a difference

The Association of Bay Area Government's Regional Housing Needs Allocation calls for more than 14,000 additional homes to be approved in Marin County between 2023 and 2031. If supplied with natural gas-burning space and water heaters, these units would worsen greenhouse gas emissions by emitting thousands of additional tons of GHG emissions per year. (This includes methane leaks in pipelines and at the meter that have a much greater potency than carbon dioxide and, ton for ton, warm the Earth as much as 84 times more than CO<sub>2</sub>.) In addition, there are over 113,000 existing housing units in Marin, most with gas

furnaces and water heaters that have an average life span of 15 years. That's well over 10,000 replacement opportunities each year to potentially switch to electric heat pump units. Achieving uniform countywide adoption of the Green Building reach code could significantly change the building sector's outsized impact on GHG emissions, at least in Marin.

### What you can do:

- Gather information and support the Green Building reach code initiative in your town.
- Encourage your jurisdiction's staff and council members to take part in

*Building Electrification, cont p. 11*

## Nona Dennis Commendation

from p. 1

*You are respected and revered for the science and pragmatism you bring to the public discourse, empowered by your strong, grounded environmental and conservationist values and ethos. But it is your humanity, your character, your personality – your affect and your aspect, the manner in which you interact with others, all the soft skills that have been talked about today – that take your advocacy, influence, and contributions to a whole other level.*

*As has been noted by many today: You've been a mentor. A leader. A hero and a workhorse. You've been a teacher, a trusted sounding board, a reliable resource. And in whatever role— so incredibly humane, generous, helpful. Who you are as a human being exponentially increases the effectiveness of your advocacy and the influence you have on others. The combination is pretty darn powerful. And we have been the beneficiaries.*

*We are so happy to be able to recognize you today, as you step down from chairpersonship of MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee and for all you've meant to our Board, to Marin County Parks and Open Space, and to the community at large. Thank you, thank you, thank you!* 🌿

### RESOLUTION of THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT COMMENDING NONA DENNIS

*... WHEREAS, under Nona's leadership, MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee's monthly meetings and occasional field trips have become the primary forum for county, state and federal public lands and open space agencies; municipalities with land management responsibilities for recreation uses and watershed protection; conservation organizations; recreational user groups; and anyone else with an interest in the important issues involving Marin County's public parks, open spaces, and natural resources — to gather, learn, discuss, and deliberate those issues on a regular basis; and*

*... WHEREAS, Nona has continued the long- standing responsibility of the Parks and Open Space Committee for formulating MCL's adopted policies regarding public open space and natural resource preservation and management, and has tirelessly advocated for and effectively communicated those policies to the Marin County Open Space District Board of Directors and other decision-making bodies throughout Marin County; and*

*... WHEREAS, in December 2021, after 12 years at the helm, Nona Dennis retired as Chair of the Parks and Open Space Committee. Her calm, unflappable, everyone is welcome style created space for new relationships, enhanced communication, collaboration, and strengthened MCL's legacy of community driven protection and preservation of Marin's natural resources and open spaces. ...*



## Kenkel Interview

from p. 5

Lake Erie. Park staff worked with many partners in establishing a state-designated Recreational Water Trail. In commemorating the 50th anniversary of the river's 1969 burning, [the fire that became a symbol for passage of the federal 1972 Clean Water Act], the Park, its partners, and residents had many beneficial outcomes to celebrate, and there are more to come.

At Point Reyes, after we complete new ranch operating agreements, implement the policies included in the ROD, and move forward on the Elk Management Plan for Tomales Point, we look forward to creating a vision and working toward outcomes that everyone can celebrate here, too!

*Since our interview, the Park Service requested the Coastal Commission to delay its first annual reporting on water quality strategy and climate action strategy, stating that the federal lawsuit filed in January against the GMPA delayed the ROA negotiations and the issuance of new leases. The Coastal Commission denied the request, and at the April 7, 2022, hearing, commissioners unanimously rejected the Park's water quality strategy. Kenkel agreed to collaborate with Commission staff and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to address the plan's deficiencies and to return in September 2022 with a plan that will meet the conditions set forth in the Coastal Commission's Consistency finding.*

Editor's note:



### Conservation depends on people

This issue spotlights and celebrates people. Conservation depends on the efforts, shared intent, and collective action of the many, past and present, pictured and not pictured, herein. They are the reason Marin's natural landscapes and ecosystems are cared for, biodiversity is preserved, and the environmental health of Marin's communities is prioritized for present and future generations. They are of different professions and occupations, are in paid positions or are volunteers, but they share the continued commitment to conservation on which our future depends.



## Building electrification *from p. 9*

the County-led effort to encourage consistent Green Building reach codes across all jurisdictions.

- Ask that a Green Building reach code update be added to an upcoming Council agenda so your city or town's participation in the joint process can be discussed in a public forum.
- Join others in meeting with your district Supervisor.
- Regularly speak up during public comment at Council and Board of Supervisor meetings.
- Participate in public workshops conducted by the County. [Marin County is planning a public workshop, coming soon, likely in June.]
- Send letters supporting the Green Building reach code to local newspapers.
- **Be the change.** When it comes time to decommission your gas-powered appliances, space or water heaters, replace them with high-efficiency all-electric heat pump models. If you haven't already, switch to MCE's Deep Green to support solar, wind and other clean power. Optimize the insulation of your home's heated and cooled spaces to maximize energy efficiency.

*This article is based on presentations made by Brian Reyes, Marin County's Sustainability Planner, and David Moller of the Marin/Sonoma Building Electrification Squad at MCL's February 18th CAWG meeting. For more information, see the County's [website](#), and read [Marin's Proposed Green Building Model](#) and [FAQs](#). The Marin/Sonoma Building Electrification Squad is leading Marin's advocacy campaign. To connect, contact: [david@mollers.us](mailto:david@mollers.us). To sign up to receive CAWG agendas for future meetings, we encourage you to call or email [MCL](#).*



### In Memoriam: Doug Wilson, Jr.



**A**s many of you know, our friend, fellow board member, and MCL's Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) chair, Doug Wilson, passed away February 27th.

Doug was truly a special person, a wise and thoughtful leader who was committed to working for a common good. With his steady presence and gentle manner, often smiling and funny, he put others at ease. Yet, Doug was also serious and determined. He approached his work positively, with intelligence and responsibility, first informing himself and then working collaboratively with others to effect long-range, inclusive, and equitable approaches to protecting Marin's natural and human environments from the effects of climate change.

While his humble and self-effacing manner didn't broadcast his contributions to the County, they were many. Doug served on both Marin County's Parks and Open Space and its Cultural Affairs Commissions, and he chaired the Marin County Solid Waste Advisory Committee. He served eight years as councilmember, including as mayor, for the Town of Fairfax, and as Marin County's elected representative on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Doug was a long-time advocate for Marin Clean Energy, offering both support and constructive criticism in his effort to encourage faster action toward greening our communities with clean energy, energy efficiency, and other climate-resilient strategies. Doug previously served as member and chair of the Marin Sierra Club

Executive Committee before joining MCL's Board in 2013. In 2014, Doug and fellow board member, Pam Reaves, formed MCL's CAWG. CAWG evolved into a community that hosted important speakers and convened other organizations and local leaders focused on climate solutions. The collaboration served a key role in creating the countywide Drawdown: Marin effort.

Doug also formed a MCL Clean Energy Group subcommittee. Doug's commitment was selfless and unwavering.

Doug's life was also rich with friends and colleagues beyond the environmental community. He was an active painter and ceramicist at Gate Five Clay, and had been a craftsman carpenter and an experienced builder and project manager on many important projects in San Francisco. He was on the board of the Marin Museum of Contemporary Art. Doug was also dedicated to his Saturday morning Tai Chi community.

Doug made peace with his impending death. Many of his friends and colleagues were deeply moved by the grace and serenity with which Doug faced the end of the life he loved so much. Many months before Doug died, he penned a letter of his thoughts and posted it on his bulletin board. He spoke of the incredible privilege of having wonderful friends; he said he realized that the afterlife would be all the friends who outlived him and all the world that continued after he was gone. He worried that the world is heading toward the edge of cataclysm. He advised us to gather the power that we have and get to work. And lest we forget, he ended: "This place is amazing."

At MCL's April 29th Annual Meeting, Periann Wood, Doug's wife of 38 years and former MCL board member, accepted the Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Award on Doug's behalf. The award was presented to Doug with MCL's deep appreciation for his lifelong commitment to public service, to advancing civic engagement, and to protecting and preserving Marin's natural assets. He is very much missed.

*Compiled from the many who shared their thoughts on Doug's passing.*

*– Kate Powers*

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*Board of Directors meetings are held at 6:00 PM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.*

**Issue Committee Meeting Schedule**

(subject to change—check website)

**Land Use and Transportation:**

1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of the month, 10:00 AM—12:00 PM

**Parks and Open Space:**

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

**Fire and Environment Working Group:**

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

**Climate Action Working Group:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Fri. of the month, 9:00 AM—11:00 AM

**Agricultural Land Use:**

Meets quarterly, 4<sup>th</sup> Fri. of the month,  
9:30—11:30 AM

**North Marin Unit:** Check website for times

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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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## MCL'S 2022 ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

(left to right)



**PETER BEHR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:**  
**DOUG WILSON**, accepted by PERIANN WOOD

**TED WELLMAN WATER AWARD:**  
**MARIN WATER LAGUNITAS FISHERIES PROGRAM**,  
accepted by ERIC ETTLINGER

**JOHN M. MCPHAIL, JR. GREEN BUSINESS AWARD:**  
**CONSERVATION CORPS NORTH BAY**,  
accepted by JOE DELANEY



**MARIN GREEN AWARD  
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEADERSHIP:**  
**SHARON FARRELL**

**YOUTH AWARD FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEADERSHIP:**  
**MARTA TOBAR**

**SPECIAL AWARD FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
ACHIEVEMENT: CHILENO  
VALLEY NEWT BRIGADE**,  
accepted by SALLY GALE

**VOLUNTEER AWARD:**  
**MIKE SWEZY**

