

July 28th, 2022



Protecting Marin Since 1934

Mr. Dennis Rodoni, President
Board of Directors
Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA)
28 Liberty Ship Way, Sausalito, CA 94965

Re: Greater Ross Valley Fuel Break

Dear Supervisor Rodoni,

Marin Conservation League (MCL) has been appreciative of the communication, transparency and partnership MWPA has displayed as it has gotten started in its important mission. The monthly Environmental Stakeholders meetings with staff and consultants are important, informative, and productive.

We mention this, as MCL's comments stem from those meetings, as follows:

1. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document identifies a 1,300-acre, 38-mile-long and 300-foot-wide fuel break roughly encircling Ross Valley but gives little local detail. As Executive Officer Mark Brown, and Planning and Program Manager Anne Crealock have stated, however, most activity on the ground will likely focus on 150 feet in width. MCL believes an additional level of communication with environmental stakeholders and the public will be important as each of the more detailed segment plans along the fuel break is being developed and implemented. This would ensure that implementation complies with the careful ecological approach expressed by staff and consultants during the stakeholder group meetings. Note that Marin County Parks and Open Space Department is in the process of completing its own segment-level implementation plans and are already sharing these more detailed prescriptions with their Environmental Roundtable participants and the public, thus keeping everyone on the same page. We encourage MWPA to take the same approach on land segments along the Ross Valley fuel break.
2. MCL supports the MWPA hiring additional natural resource professionals, noted by Anne Crealock in the June 6, 2022 stakeholder meeting. This will establish institutional knowledge in MWPA regarding Cal Fire's Vegetation Treatment Plan environmental impact report (EIR) mitigation measures, such as monitoring of wetlands and invasives, native plant identification, wildlife habitat function, avoiding vegetation type conversion, as well as other natural resource mitigations committed to in the MWPA Project Specific Analysis (PSA). The quality of work and support of the project will be largely dependent upon knowledgeable experts ensuring that field crews are guided in the many cited practices. Conducting Biological Resources training for workers and discussing natural resources with fire protection professionals, Firesafe Marin, and the public also require that staff professionals have strong field experience and good communication skills.

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Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin County.

3. MCL recommends that MWPA begin educating the public on the practices that are being adopted through this PSA. It will be important for the many residents around each segment in this 38-mile-long fuel break to understand what to expect, why it is happening, and how the environment is being protected consistent with the reduction of wildfire risk. This is also a good time to begin a program of education around the Ecologically Sound Practices you have adopted, in which MCL is a partner.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations,



Robert Miller
President



Terri Thomas
Vice President