

Measure A

Preserving Marin's parks, farmlands and open space



Michael Woolsey

The 585-acre Dolcini Ranch, in Hicks Valley, is one of the nearly 45,000 acres on 69 Marin farms and ranches protected from development by a MALT agricultural easement. 20% of Measure A funds would be devoted to farmland protection.

By Nona Dennis

What is Measure A?

Backed by broad support from diverse community interests, the Marin County Board of Supervisors on August 7 unanimously agreed to place a sales tax measure—Measure A—on the November ballot to help preserve Marin's parks, open space and farmlands. Measure A calls for a ¼ cent over the next nine years that would produce approximately \$10,000,000 in revenues annually, to be divided among three programs:

- **Parks and Open Space Program:** 65% of the funds would be used by Marin County Parks to restore natural resources, maintain existing county parks and open space preserves, and preserve natural lands. Of this

amount, 80% would go towards protecting and restoring natural resources, maintaining existing parks and preserves, and improving visitor services and safety. 20% would go towards preserving natural lands in accordance with goals of the Marin County Parks Strategic Plan.

- **Farmland Preservation Program:** 20% would be devoted to protecting Marin's multi-generational working farms and ranches through public-private programs that have protected nearly 45,000 acres of farmland from development through conservation easements since 1980.

- **Town and Special District Program:** 15% would assist Marin's municipalities and

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SB 375—The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By David Schnapf

MCL has been tracking the implementation of Senate Bill 375—the state “anti-sprawl” act—since its passage four years ago (See MCL *Newsletters*—January-February 2009; March-April 2011; May-June 2011). SB 375 is one element of the state's broader effort to address climate change that began with Assembly Bill 32, the “Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.” SB 375 seeks to reduce green house gas (GHG) emissions by focusing new development near jobs and public transit in order to reduce use of private autos and light trucks. By encouraging people to live closer to where they work, and enhancing access to public transit (so-called “transit oriented development”), SB 375 seeks to achieve a *per capita* reduction in vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and, thereby, a *per capita* reduction in GHG emissions. The targeted reductions in emissions for the San Francisco Bay Region are 7% by 2020 and 15% by 2035, relative to the 2005 base year.

It is easy to support the overall goal of reducing GHG by reducing urban sprawl and dependence on autos. However, translating this goal into a thirty-year plan which directs both local-level land use/housing decisions and transportation investment strategies, is complex and rife with uncertainty. A key element of the program is the establishment

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A Message from the President—In support of Measure A



It never seems like autumn in Marin when September rolls around. Sometimes we get our best summer weather then. The sure signs of autumn are the election posters and campaign activities.

MCL is not normally involved in elections, but occasionally ventures into campaigns on measures that affect our environment. This is one of those times. The Parks, Open Space and Farmland Preservation measure, Measure A, on the Marin County ballot has been followed closely by the MCL Board for the past several months. (See page 1). The measure would approve a nine-year ¼ cent sales tax to support local parks, open space and farmland preservation. We have contributed to its final form, and the Board voted unanimously to support it.

Recent budgetary cutbacks have adversely affected our county's ability to keep up with the standards set when voters approved creation of the Open Space District in 1972. Now with tens of thousands more people

living in the county, our parks and open space preserves are being loved to pieces. Farmlands we all consider integral to the character of Marin are being challenged to continue to provide the foods we need. It is essential that this ballot measure pass to be able to provide safe and well maintained parks and open space that are accessible to all residents of the county. These are the "backyards" for people who live in multifamily housing, places to exercise and enjoy nature for all of us and habitat for a vast variety of animals, birds and plants. Our farmlands not only provide locally grown food, but the pastoral landscape we too often take for granted.

It is not easy to promote a ¼ cent sales tax increase as the economy struggles to heal, and when the state is also urging a ¼ cent increase. The only encouraging element is that the state sales tax dropped one cent last year, so even if both measures pass, we will be a half cent lower than we were last year.



Dru Parker

Marin's special districts, like the Marinwood Community Services District, could use Measure A funds to maintain and improve their playground equipment.

MCL came into being to protect the special places that are now part of the parks and open spaces we enjoy. These spaces are part of our legacy to future generations. It is now incumbent upon us to assure these places will continue to provide the safety and solace we need now and into the future. **Please support Measure A.**

Bayfront Meadow: A successful partnership

by Tom Allen



Dru Parker

Bayfront Meadow, Richardson Bay, and Tamalpais High School clock tower

The five-acre "Meadow" at Bayfront Park in Mill Valley was first envisioned in 2003, at which time there was much competition for limited waterfront land between active and passive recreational users. A short time later, Friends of Bayfront Meadow (FOBM) was founded by a group of local citizens for the purpose of preserving and enhancing this open space, which is intended for passive recreational use. Its upkeep is supported jointly by Mill Valley Parks and Friends of Bayfront Meadow, in association with Marin Conservation League, which acts as fiscal agent for the Friends group.

Since 2004, generous friends and neighbors have contributed time and money toward the rehabilitation of this patch of bayside landfill by contouring the land and enriching the soil; adding a recycled water irrigation system; resurfacing major pedestrian paths; and planting mounds with native and drought-tolerant species.

One Saturday morning, April 21, 2012, Parks staff and ten volunteers planted 300 plants that are now providing both color and bird and pollinator habitat in the area.

The Meadow is located across the street from the Mill Valley police station parking lot on Hamilton Drive. Donations for its continued maintenance and improvement can be made to Marin Conservation League; indicate "FOBM" on the donation.

Status Updates

Marin's State Parks

The news from State Parks in Marin is promising in spite of the cloud that descended when the State discovered \$54 million in hidden funds. After a year of effort to raise funds and gain community support, Friends of China Camp came through on their promise to keep **China Camp State Park** open seven days a week. Under an agreement with the State and with the guidance of Marin District State Parks Superintendent Danita Rodriguez, FOCC has begun operating the park. The organizing committee is now engaged in installing pay kiosks to collect parking fees and coordinating volunteer training through the Marin District to complement the shared ranger and maintenance staff. All fees and donations will remain with the park.

Olompali State Historic Park will be open on weekends only, with the support of the non-profit The Olompali People. No services beyond basic water, electricity, and sewer will be available. The heavily used **Mt. Tamalpais State Park** was never targeted for closure but suffers nonetheless from serious budget constraints for trail maintenance and services. **Tamalpais Conservation Club**, this year celebrating its centennial, will host a fund-raiser "Mt. Tam Jam" extravaganza on June 22, 2013. In the meantime, TCC is planning an October 6 event centered at Mountain Theater to raise funds for much needed ranger and maintenance positions.

The announcement that the **State Department of Parks and Recreation** had discovered some \$54 million in concealed funds had a disastrous effect on public confidence, coming as it did in the wake of a year of extraordinary efforts across the state to raise funds to keep parks open. It is critical to recognize that about \$34 million were fees earmarked for off-road vehicle facilities. Governor Brown has now assured the public that the other \$20 million will be used to make critically needed maintenance fixes—such as to water and waste treatment facilities required to keep parks open—and to establish a matching fund for contributions. While this will help in the short-term, it is a one-time "find" only. To address a greater than \$1 billion maintenance backlog that confronts the Park System and to continue to

keep parks open next year and beyond, longer term solutions will be needed.

650 N. San Pedro Rd. ("Baycreek")

For many years, MCL has followed a proposed residential development on North San Pedro Road through environmental and merits hearings before the County Planning Commission—interspersed with long delays. We have consistently called for a reduction in the number and size of homes, citing physical, biological, and aesthetic constraints due to steep topography, wooded vegetation, and the site's location on the rural fringe between built-up Santa Venetia neighborhoods and Buck's Landing and China Camp State Park. On June 12, the Board of Supervisors voted 4 to 1 to uphold the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny without prejudice the applicant's proposal for twelve homes plus two second units.

The Supervisors gave the applicant the opportunity to revise the plan and return to the County within twelve months, without incurring additional fees. They also gave Supervisor Susan Adams, in whose district the site is located, an opportunity to facilitate face-to-face meetings between applicant and the community to consider possible revisions that would be agreeable to both sides.

These meetings between the applicant and a four-member community working group have provided an opportunity for both community and applicant to air their positions and concerns. At this writing, Supervisor Adams had planned to continue the meetings weekly with a resolution targeted for late August. All evidence pointed to a stalemate on the twelve proposed units; whether home size or site plan would be modified in other respects could not be predicted. Certainly the local Santa Venetia community has made every effort to inform itself and to continue its diligent engagement in the

planning and review process. MCL continues to recommend eight or nine homes as the maximum number of units the site can comfortably accommodate.

San Rafael Airport Recreational Facility

San Rafael's decision to approve an 85,400 square-foot indoor soccer facility with lighted outdoor playing fields next to the San Rafael Airport runway continues to be on hold. The San Rafael Planning Commission approved the project on a 4 to 1 vote. The City Council postponed a hearing scheduled for August 7 to a date uncertain, pending review by the Fair Political Practices Commission of Mayor Gary Phillips' possible conflict of interest. Mayor Phillips leases space for his airplane at the Airport. MCL partnered with **Marin Audubon Society** and **Gallinas Creek Defense Council** in engaging Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger, environmental attorneys, to send a letter to the City challenging the adequacy of the EIR. In our view, the intensity of the recreational use violates the intent of the 1983 covenant to limit development intensity on the site and conflicts with zoning of the site. Among other issues, the EIR does not make a convincing case that the endangered California clapper rail population in Gallinas Creek would become habituated to disturbance from this intensive use. Furthermore, locating a group recreational facility within designated airport safety zones presents a serious hazard. The area is also vulnerable to flooding from future sea level rise. On these and other grounds, MCL urges that the project be denied.

Gallinas Creek marshes serve as habitat for the endangered California clapper rail. The proposed sports facility would be built between the north fork of the Creek and the airport runway.



Dru Parker

Marin's water—an update on Russian River supply

Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) General Manager **Grant Davis** (and former MCL board member) was the featured speaker at the regular monthly meeting of MCL's Water and Watersheds Committee on July 26, 2012. He gave an overview of his Agency's current activities and provided an update on water supply issues, particularly as they relate to Marin County. He also described a demonstration project that is getting underway, pursuant to a 2008 Biological Opinion, to improve summer rearing habitat for Coho salmon and steelhead in Dry Creek rather than install a tunnel or pipeline to bypass the creek.

Water for Marin Households

About 25% of Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) water and about 80% of the North Marin Water District (NMWD) water comes from the Russian River system regulated by the Sonoma agency. (For background, including diversions from the Eel River into the Russian River, see *MCL Newsletter*, November-December 2010, at marinconservationleague.org)

The SCWA was established as a separate district in 1949, with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acting as its Board of Directors, thus integrating land and water use. The Agency supplies water to about 600,000 people through many contractors,

including NMWD and MMWD. Unlike Marin County, which has many separate agencies and districts governing water, wastewater and stormwater, the SCWA oversees all of Sonoma County's water resources. According to public information officer Brad Sherwood, the Agency currently distributes a total of about 46,000 acre feet of water annually, 5,700 acre feet of which are sold to Marin's two water agencies. A Water Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from all the contractors, advises SCWA on matters that affect the contractors.

Grant stated that SCWA has water supplies sufficient through at least 2025 and likely to 2035 for all its contracted users. He hopes that SCWA will be renewing its contracts with Marin's water districts, but he stressed the need for all contractors to implement conservation measures. "Conservation is cheaper in the long run than new supply," Grant emphasized, and SCWA wants to avoid tension among contractors as well as mitigate the constraints that all but preclude obtaining new supply.

Dry Creek Habitat Improvement

The Russian River and its major tributaries, including Dry Creek, are home to populations of three species of fish that are threatened

or endangered: steelhead, Coho salmon, and Chinook salmon. The decline of these species is due to historic overfishing, gravel mining, sedimentation from logging and past agricultural practices. The causes of decline also include flood control and water supply projects in the main river and in Dry Creek below Warm Springs Dam, which forms Lake Sonoma reservoir. Dry Creek is a critical component in the Sonoma agency's water transmission system.

The Dry Creek project described by Grant is required by a 2008 Biological Opinion made under the Endangered Species Act by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Opinion found that some aspects of the SCWA's flood control and water supply operations in the river below Warm Springs Dam threaten to jeopardize the continued existence of steelhead and Coho salmon populations. A

DID YOU KNOW? About 25% of MMWD water and about 80% of NMWD water supply comes from the Russian River system

14-mile stretch of Dry Creek carries Lake Sonoma water from Warm Springs Dam to

the Russian River north of Healdsburg. This stretch has fast-moving water that makes it difficult for juvenile fish to survive. The federal mandate requires, over a 15-year period, that changes be made in the configuration of this stretch to create slow-moving pools and fish refuge along six miles of the creek.

These habitat improvement strategies are intended to allow water flows from Lake Sonoma into Dry Creek to be greater than the flow rate set by the federal orders as optimal for fish habitat during the summer months. The biological opinion also requires SCWA to conduct a feasibility study for a pipeline that would bypass Dry Creek altogether. If the habitat improvements are not successful in increasing fish populations by 2018 a pipeline could be installed to redirect the swift-moving summertime flows.

In describing the Dry Creek project, Grant stressed the Agency's preference for natural habitat improvement over pipeline construction. Because Dry Creek is almost entirely privately owned, landowner support is essential. As the Dry Creek Valley is one of Sonoma's prime vineyard regions, and Dry Creek and its aquifer are used for irrigation and frost protection for growers as well as domestic use in the valley, landowners want sufficient flow to meet their needs. Grant said



The Warm Springs Dam releases water from Lake Sonoma into Dry Creek

Don Parker

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several property owners have been cooperative with the restoration work that is focused initially on a 1,500 foot demonstration stretch. He hopes to complete work on the first mile by 2014. The demonstration project will allow landowners and the responsible federal and state agencies to see how enhancements work on a smaller scale before embarking on the larger six-mile project. He expressed optimism that other growers will support habitat improvements when they see positive results demonstrated.

Grant estimated that project costs will run about \$6-8 million per mile and that the full cost of implementing the biological opinion to maintain the system and avoid a jeopardy finding for fish would be up to \$150 million over 15 years. He expressed concern about having to compete for federal and state funding with the Bay-Delta and other water interests and urged that Marin County support the SCWA efforts on behalf of maintaining healthy fish populations.

The good news is that the fish runs this year have been greatly improved, and the cold water that is released below Warm Springs Dam is just what the Coho need.

Wineries and Casinos

In response to questions on other water issues, Grant told attendees that impacts of gravel mining still exist in the Alexander Valley reach of the Russian River, and there is a need to reclaim some of the old gravel pits. Regarding the new Rohnert Park gambling casino, he said water use has been estimated at 300 acre feet annually but "hopes we can get it to 150 acre feet with conservation features that we will try to integrate into the



Dru Parker

Dry Creek Habitat Enhancement on private property near Lambert Ridge Road

facilities."

Water and Watersheds Committee

The Water and Watersheds Committee is continuing its presentations of experts at monthly meetings covering a wide range of water and watershed issues that affect Marin County. Recent topics have focused on issues posed by the numbers of wastewater and sanitation (sewer) districts in Marin, and on proposed new federal and state requirements for managing and monitoring the quality of stormwater runoff throughout the county.

The Committee's August 23 meeting featured North Bay Water Reuse Authority's water recycling program. The Committee meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 4:30 p.m. All MCL members and the public are welcome and encouraged to attend.

New Director Profile

Judith Teichman, Pt. Reyes Station



Judy, who has long-time professional connections in San Francisco, lives part-time in Pt. Reyes Station and part-time in San Francisco. A graduate of the University of Michigan Law School in 1966, Judy worked as an Assistant Regional Attorney for the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare for five years, focusing on civil rights and health law.

From 1972 to 1986 she was a Deputy City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco. Among other assignments, she served as house counsel to the city's museums and represented the city in both federal and state courts on a variety of issues. Later she served as Deputy Director of Administration, then part-time as a Special Assistant to the Director, for the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

She has authored numerous articles on legal issues affecting museums and served as a member of the faculty of several ALI/ABA/Smithsonian-sponsored conferences on legal problems of museum administration.

Judy retired in 1995 and increasingly has been involved in West Marin activities. Most recently she helped organize several community meetings on issues involving the national parks, agriculture in Marin and other topics.

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special districts in managing their parks, preserves, recreation programs, and wildfire risk reduction.

As one supervisor observed on approving Measure A for the ballot, "There is something here for everyone!"

Forty years ago, on November 7, 1972, another "Measure A" was passed overwhelmingly by the voters, establishing the Marin County Open Space District. The argument in support of the measure stated that it would "provide a predictable, long-term source of funds to bring the most threatened open space lands into public ownership so that they may be enjoyed in perpetuity by all the citizens of Marin County." The County has delivered on that promise far beyond expectations of the time; many important lands have been saved in 40 years, about 20,000 acres, and they are being enjoyed "in perpetuity" by millions of residents and visitors annually. Many more acres of threatened lands remain in private ownership with an uncertain future.

Why do County parks and open space need more money?

In 1972, no one could anticipate the impact that 1978's Proposition 13 would have. Revenues for the fledgling open space district were cut in half. Nor could anyone predict that later County budget shortfalls would cut across many services and needs in the county, vastly reducing the funds required by County Parks to maintain its rich natural resources and diverse recreational facilities. And while growth in numbers of people who enjoy our parks and open spaces is a demonstration of their popularity, it has also taken its toll in wear and tear.

At current funding levels, Marin County Parks can no longer give its parks and open space preserves the care that they deserve. The Open Space Strategic Plan, alone, outlines 88 projects requiring an investment of \$33 million to adequately steward open space preserves, such as controlling invasive plant species, abating fire hazard, and maintaining trails. Also, many of the County's parks, such as the popular McNears Beach Park, were developed in the 1970s and are now 40 years old. Age and use have taken a toll



photos by Dru Parker

McNears Beach Park, on the shores of San Pablo Bay, is a popular spot for family birthday parties and picnics. The 55-acre County Park also has a public swimming pool, tennis courts, a fishing pier, and is a favorite of open-water swimmers and kayakers. Heavy use has taken a toll on the facilities, and Measure A funds would help.

on infrastructure and facilities (paving, fishing piers, irrigation systems, buildings, playgrounds, ball fields, pool, etc.). At the same time, over the past three years, the Parks department has experienced staff cuts that make it difficult to carry out necessary maintenance.

Why more open space?

The County Parks Department's Strategic Plan has targeted approximately 15,000 acres within ten general areas in the county. These lands, still in private ownership, represent gaps that, if acquired, would create corridors for wildlife, increase habitat and trail connectivity, or preserve wetlands and other sensitive habitats. Open space lands provide important ecosystem services such as regulating storm water runoff to prevent flooding and cleansing the air we breathe and the water we drink. Open spaces also serve as community separators, greenbelts, and as "backyards" for entire neighborhoods.

No money has been budgeted by the county for land acquisition for many years. Two recent small acquisitions in Baltimore Canyon and adjacent to Giacomini Open



View of Mt. Tam from the County Open Space 680 Trail

Space Preserve were made possible by the county's ability to leverage limited funds to gain substantial state grants and private donations. Unfortunately, state funds for land acquisition are now nearly gone.

What about our farmlands?

Family farms and ranches make up almost 40% of the County's land area and are fundamental to the County's agricultural economy, environment, cultural history, and quality of life. They are a part of what makes Marin unique in the Bay Area. Most ranches in East Marin have been replaced by urban development. West Marin in the 1960s might have followed suit had it not been for the efforts of all Marin to preserve its agriculture. Given the location of agriculture on the edge of the metropolitan Bay Area, however, policy and zoning alone have not

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been able to protect Marin's family farms and ranches from high land values—a reality that continues to threaten the future of family farming in Marin.

The nonprofit and community-based organization Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) was formed in 1980. By purchasing conservation easements in voluntary transactions with landowners, MALT has enabled many Marin farmers and ranchers to continue operating their ranches and pass them on to succeeding generations, thereby preventing subdivision and non-agricultural development of their lands. MALT has now permanently protected 69 Marin farms and ranches totaling over 40% of privately-owned agricultural land in the County.

Without MALT's activity, West Marin would be a very different place. For example, recent purchases of conservation easements enabled a Tomales area rancher to pay a \$1 million estate tax; allowed one sibling to buy out the other three owners; and helped a brother and sister to buy out five co-owners. Without conservation easements such as these the properties would have been sold, almost

certainly to non-agricultural buyers, and the ranching families would be gone. Over a period of time, agriculture would gradually disappear from West Marin.

Of the funds needed for the purchase of recent conservation easements, just under half was provided by grants from state and federal programs, and the remainder came from individual contributions and a few foundation grants. Unfortunately, these State funding sources will soon be exhausted, and without some public sources as leverage, it will be difficult to obtain sufficient private contributions and grants to replace them.

How will proceeds be administered?

Measure A requires the County to appoint a Citizens' Oversight Committee consisting of seven county residents who are neither elected officials nor employees of any agency or organization that would benefit from the proceeds of the sales tax. The committee, in public and open meetings, would review and report on how the money is spent. No funds would go to the state's General Fund.

Farmland easements would be held by the County and funds could be expended only in accordance with pre-approved program policies and procedures, for example, used only for capital (acquisition) costs; matched at least 1:1; ensure that creeks or streams on property are identified and protected; and would be monitored and enforced by the County with monitoring costs borne by the easement Holder.

What if Measure A fails?

Without a predictable infusion of funds, the County's parks and open space preserves will face continued, and potentially irrevocable, decline. As staff sizes continue to shrink, parks

will face additional closures or fee increases. Marin cities and towns have comparable problems: their own parks will continue to deteriorate and be subject to closures or elimination of free and low cost programs. If Measure A is not approved, family farms could go unprotected, and could be sold, subdivided and developed. Most will agree that these are not acceptable prospects for Marin!

For more information about Measure A, visit yesmarinparksopenspace.com

MCL office to move in October

In October, Marin Conservation League will be moving to a new location in North San Rafael:

175 N. Redwood Drive

Suite 135

San Rafael, CA 94903

The fully accessible building, located between AAA and Smith Ranch Homes has two private conference rooms and can accommodate meetings of up to fifty people.

The phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

Phone: 415-485-6257

Fax: 415-485-6259

MCL committee meetings will be held in the new building starting October 1.

Directions: From 101, take Smith Ranch Road exit east. Take the first left onto North Redwood Drive. Curve around the hill about 1/3 mile and pull into the parking lot on the left. The office is on the first floor and the conference rooms are directly across the hall.



Map courtesy Marin Agricultural Land Trust

Events

Walk into (Conservation) History #11 - China Camp

MCL's 11th Walk Into (Conservation) History on May 5, led by biologist Kathy Cuneo, preservationist Louise Kanter Lipsey, MCL past President Nona Dennis and Friends of China Camp, showcased the saving of this significant State Park from development. The next Walk will be Sept. 22 on Tam—see page 12.



Walk photos by Michael Hanrahan

Coastal Cleanup is Saturday, September 15th

Join MCL on Saturday, September 15, from 9 a.m. to noon for the 28th Annual California Coastal Cleanup. In 2011, volunteers in California collected more than 1.3 million pounds of trash from our beaches and waterways.

MCL will host three locations for the annual cleanup: Novato volunteers will begin at the Scottsdale Pond Gazebo; San Rafael volunteers will meet at Mahon Creek, behind San Rafael Corporate Center; and the Southern Marin site will be at the Sausalito Waterfront, meeting at the Bay Model.

All volunteers should bring heavy gloves, water and sunscreen, and wear their work clothes and sturdy shoes that can get wet. Visit marinconservationleague.org/events for more details.

Picnic on the Porch:

On July 28, nearly 110 picnickers of all ages converged on the MCL office for the annual Picnic on the Porch. The barbecue featured grass-fed beef from Marin Sun Farms and Let's Be Frank hot dogs, fruit pies from Upper Crust Pies, Moylan's beer, and other culinary delights provided by the MCL Board. Film Night in the Park donated the door prizes.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the final picnic at Fifth and F a success!

Next up: at our new office—the Holiday Party in December. Watch your inbox for details.



Stu Smith

Events

**Public Forum Sept. 19–
Envisioning Marin**

A public forum designed to help in visualizing Plan Bay Area as it applies to Marin County will be held on September 19, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the San Rafael Community Center, 618 B Street. A panel of speakers, moderated by **Supervisor Kate Sears**, will take a “bird’s eye” view of SB 375 and the Sustainable Communities Strategy as it might look in Marin County over the next 40 years: *“Envisioning Marin: Long-term Equity, Environmental, and Climate Solutions.”*

Featuring **John King**, architectural and urban planning columnist with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the panel also includes speakers **Bob Brown**, past Director of Community Development, San Rafael; **Betty Pagett**, noted housing expert; and **Nona Dennis**, past President of MCL. The panel will examine how development patterns might reduce carbon pollution and curb climate change, deliver equity and affordable housing options, respect Marin’s natural resources and environmental constraints, and create livable, healthy communities.

This free forum is being jointly sponsored by **League of Women Voters, Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative, Marin Conservation League, Sustainable San Rafael, and Sustainable Marin**. For more information, contact Marge Macris at 415-381-6667 or mmacris@aol.com.

Business–Environment Breakfast, Friday, September 28, 7:30 AM

Dr. Whendee Silver, The Marin Carbon Project
Carbon sequestration in annual grasslands: climate change mitigation potential for Marin and beyond

On Friday, September 28, **Dr. Whendee L. Silver** of the UC Berkeley Ecosystem Sciences Division will speak at MCL’s Business–Environment Breakfast at the Embassy suites in San Rafael, 101 McInnis Parkway.

Dr. Silver is the principal scientific investigator for the **Marin Carbon Project**. The research project was formed to examine how the sequestration of carbon in local annual grassland (grazing lands on ranches and wide open spaces) can be a source of ecological and agricultural benefit to rural communities while reducing associated greenhouse gas emissions. **John Wick**, Nicasio, is the Project Director.

Dr. Silver will give an update on the success of the project and where the research will head from here.

Dr. Silver earned her Ph.D. in Ecosystem Ecology from Yale University. Her research interests are in the field of ecosystem ecology and the relationships among nutrient cycling, land-use, and biodiversity.

Tickets are \$25 for MCL members and \$30 for non-members. A full breakfast buffet is



included. Advance registration and payment are required by September 24. Students should contact MCL regarding reduced rates. Register at marinconservationleague.com/events or call 415-485-6257.

Sponsored in part by **MARIN COUNTY PARKS** PRESERVATION-RECREATION



REGISTRATION FORM BUSINESS–ENVIRONMENT BREAKFAST: MARIN CARBON PROJECT, SEPT. 28, 2012

Name(s) _____

Title/Org. _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

MCL member \$25 Non-member \$30 Total Due \$ _____

Check enclosed, payable to MCL Charge my Credit Card the amt. shown

card # _____

exp. date _____ name on card _____

card sec. code _____ signature _____

Ticket price includes full breakfast buffet.

Pre-registration required by September 24

Make checks payable to MCL or pay total due by credit card. Mail form to: MCL, 1623–A Fifth Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901, or call 415-485-6257 or register online at marinconservationleague.org

Refunds given only if the event is canceled.

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of "Priority Development Areas" (PDAs) where growth and transit are supposed to be focused.

Implementation of SB 375 in the Bay Area has been the joint responsibility of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), working under the banners "Plan Bay Area" and "One Bay Area." In March 2011 the agencies issued their "Initial Vision Scenario," which was described as the starting point for developing a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" for the region, as required by the law.

The pace of the program has accelerated in 2012. In March the agencies issued their draft "Jobs-Housing Connection Scenario." In May they issued their "Preferred Transportation Investment Strategy," which was then combined with a revised "Jobs-Housing Connection Scenario" to become the "Preferred Land Use and Transportation Investment Strategy," (the "Preferred Scenario"). It is noteworthy that between March and May, Plan Bay Area significantly reduced its projected growth for Marin. In June the agencies began preparing a draft program EIR, due in December for public comment, for the Preferred Scenario by soliciting public comment about the scope of the EIR and the alternatives that should be considered. MTC and ABAG expect to certify the final EIR and adopt the plan in April 2013.

Led by its Land Use and Transportation Committee, MCL has been an active



Marin County

Jurisdiction or Area Name	Place Type	HOUSING UNITS				HOUSEHOLDS			
		2010	2040	2010-2040	% Growth	2010	2040	2010-2040	% Growth
Belvedere		1,050	1,070	20	2%	930	970	40	4%
Corte Madera		4,030	4,250	230	6%	3,790	4,080	280	7%
Fairfax		3,590	3,790	210	6%	3,380	3,620	240	7%
Larkspur		6,380	6,770	390	6%	5,910	6,450	540	9%
Mill Valley		6,530	6,920	380	6%	6,080	6,540	450	7%
Novato		21,160	22,220	1,060	5%	20,280	21,450	1,170	6%
Ross		880	940	50	6%	800	860	60	8%
San Anselmo		5,540	5,790	250	5%	5,240	5,530	290	6%
San Rafael		24,010	27,400	3,390	14%	22,760	26,490	3,720	16%
	Civic Center/North Rafael Town Center	1,990	3,030	1,040		1,900	2,980	1,080	
	Downtown	2,610	3,960	1,350		2,420	3,830	1,410	
Sausalito		4,540	4,790	250	6%	4,110	4,460	350	9%
Tiburon		4,030	4,250	220	5%	3,730	4,000	270	7%
Marin County Unincorporated		29,500	30,550	1,050	4%	26,190	27,570	1,380	5%
	Urbanized 101 Corridor	4,580	5,020	440		4,290	4,810	510	

Employment Growth by PDA and Jurisdiction

Marin County

Jurisdiction or Area Name	Place Type	JOBS			
		2010	2040	2010-2040	% Growth
Belvedere		430	480	50	12%
Corte Madera		7,940	8,260	320	4%
Fairfax		1,490	1,820	330	22%
Larkspur		7,190	7,810	620	9%
Mill Valley		5,980	6,780	810	14%
Novato		20,890	24,390	3,490	17%
Ross		510	590	80	16%
San Anselmo		3,740	4,350	610	16%
San Rafael		37,620	44,960	7,340	20%
	Civic Center/North Rafael Town Center	5,660	6,860	1,200	
	Downtown	8,250	10,480	2,230	
Sausalito		6,220	7,630	1,420	23%
Tiburon		2,340	2,690	340	15%
Marin County Unincorporated		16,380	19,360	2,980	18%
	Urbanized 101 Corridor	2,280	2,960	700	

Marin County Growth Projections from the Plan Bay Area Jobs-Housing Connection Strategy, May 2012

participant in this process. We have spoken at public hearings, and have submitted written comments on several draft scenarios such as the Jobs-Housing Connection Scenario and, most recently, on the scope of the draft EIR.

In MCL's view, implementation of SB 375 in the Bay Area to date has been a mixed bag—some aspects seem both sensible and good for Marin. Other aspects have been poorly thought through or implemented.

The Good

From a Marin perspective, perhaps the best feature of the Preferred Scenario is that it acknowledges that Marin and the North Bay *should* be a low growth area. Under the Preferred Scenario, Marin is projected to have lower employment and housing growth than any other county in the Bay Area, and the four North Bay Counties (Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano) are projected to have the lowest housing growth in the region. These projections are based on the expectation that most growth in jobs will occur in Silicon Valley,

San Francisco and the East Bay. Moreover, Marin's expected growth (as revised by ABAG in May) can be accommodated within current county and city land use plans and zoning. Marin also stands to benefit from recognition of its value in providing open space and local agriculture to the Bay Region as a whole.

The Bad

The ability to make accurate projections about population and job growth over a thirty-year period, the cornerstone of the SB 375 planning effort, is simply beyond the capability of current economic/demographic models. Too many variables, assumptions and unknowns make predictions far into the future unreliable. Very small changes in the inputs can cause large changes in the predictions. Notwithstanding these known limitations, Plan Bay Area relies extensively on such modeling. On their face, the Plan Bay Area projections substantially overestimate both economic (job) and population growth throughout the region and state, far exceeding historic trends. The assumption that the economy will experience robust, continuous expansion over a thirty year period has no precedent in U.S. history.

Unfortunately, Plan Bay Area's excess growth numbers could have the unintended effect of encouraging unwarranted

Continued on Page 11

SB 375 *from Page 10*

development. There is a risk that the SB 375 process, as implemented by Plan Bay Area, has created more PDAs than necessary. This could give developers the upper hand in choosing where and when to build housing and does little to focus growth where it makes the most sense. Moreover, development in areas designated as PDAs is subject to CEQA exemptions/streamlining, so environmental impacts may not be fully reviewed. MCL has commented to ABAG and MTC about the Plan Bay Area's excessive growth forecasts.

The Ugly

Plan Bay Area has done a poor job of involving local communities and the public in the planning process, seemingly guided more by public relations than any desire to reach out to the public. Opportunities for public involvement have been limited, and public comments appear to have been disregarded. Exasperated by Plan Bay Area's failure to listen, some local officials have threatened to withdraw from ABAG. The SB 375 process is confusing and complex, yet, at recent hearings, Plan Bay Area representatives refused to answer questions from the public seeking clarifications.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that any EIR consider alternatives to the proposed agency action. In June, Plan Bay Area solicited input from the public about alternatives it should include in the draft EIR. Believing that Plan Bay Area's list of alternatives was inadequate, MCL provided several ideas about other alternatives that should be considered. Plan Bay Area ignored MCL's comments, as well as other comments it received, and in July summarily adopted the original list of alternatives. The staff memo recommending approval of these alternatives had, in fact, been written *prior to* the end of the comment period, before MCL's and others' comments were due and submitted.

MCL will continue to be involved in the SB 375 process and inform membership of significant developments. Currently, based on the revised growth numbers for Marin, it appears that the law, *in itself*, will have limited impact on local growth patterns and greenhouse gas emissions. MCL is particularly concerned, however, about the prospect of widespread exemptions from CEQA requirements here and elsewhere.

CEC Rebate Program Focuses on Household Energy Efficiency

by Ed Mainland

The MCL Climate Action Committee is reviewing a number of initiatives under the rubric of "efficiency." Among them is a program initiated early last year by the California Energy Commission (CEC), namely "Energy Upgrade California," which is administered locally by Marin County Community Development Agency (CDA). This statewide incentive-based program provides thousands of dollars in rebates and incentives for energy efficiency improvements for single-family residences and multi-family properties. The program purports to offer practical, easy-to-do actions to reduce household carbon footprint and save on energy bills. It also promotes local green jobs.

For more information about Energy Upgrade California, visit energyupgradeca.org

The Energy Upgrade California program was launched in March 2011 by CEC in collaboration with the Public Utilities Commission, public and private utilities, local governments, and non-governmental organizations. Its purpose is to promote and finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for homes and businesses, reduce energy use and, at the same time, help train contractors and building professionals. The program is funded by grants and contracts from the U.S. Department of Energy, the CEC, and California utility customers. In Marin County, the program is one of the responsibilities of the Sustainability Team within the CDA.

A key part of the program is an integrated Web Portal, EnergyUpgradeCA.org, which provides the tools and resources to property owners to help them improve their energy and water efficiency and thereby reduce utility bills. The website is a clearinghouse for information, incentives, and rebates, including alternative financing for improvements and financial

incentives by lenders. By entering zip code or county name in the program's Web portal, property owners can access available upgrade programs, rebates, financing options and participating contractors in their area.

The CEC touts the program as a "Whole House Energy Solution" for the individual home owner. By bringing together the many different elements within a home, including both electricity and natural gas, that affect energy use – and how they interact and influence health and safety of residents – the one-stop-shop guide helps the householder to select as few or as many improvements as needed, select an upgrade package that suits the household's needs; locate a participating contractor to complete an upgrade; and apply for rebates, incentives and financing to help pay for the work.

Energy Upgrade California makes these tools and resources available to local property owners to reduce their energy use. However, to qualify for rebates and incentives, a homeowner must work with a participating contractor or rater. The Marin Energy Upgrade California website can connect local homeowners with local contractors to help plan and complete an upgrade. The website includes an online interactive Home Energy Digest that shows users how to implement an energy upgrade and provides information on energy-saving measures, from insulation and duct sealing to new heating and cooling technologies.

The website also outlines how eligible California homeowners can access up to \$25,000 for energy-saving projects like insulation, heating and cooling systems, and solar panels.



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Committee Meeting Schedule

Land Use and Transportation:
1st Wed. of the month, 9:00 - 11:00 AM

Parks and Open Space:
2nd Thurs. of the month, 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Water and Watersheds: 4th Thurs. of the
month, 4:30 - 6:30 PM

*Climate Action, North Marin Unit
(NMU):* Call 415.485.6257 or see our
website for meeting details.

*Meetings (except for NMU) are at
the MCL office.*

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.
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Walk Into (Conservation) History #12 Mt. Tam

Saturday, September 22
9:30 am–1:30 pm

The looming presence of Mt. Tamalpais is Marin's most familiar and iconic natural feature. But did you know that Mt. Tam's history is also one of the great conservation achievements of the Bay Area, if not the nation?

On September 22, join MCL in collaboration with Mt. Tam Interpretative Association, MMWD and others for our 12th Walk into (Conservation) History on Mt. Tam. Hear the story of how Mt. Tam was gradually transformed from private to public land. It is a tale of astounding vision and persistence on the part of many dedicated people.

This family-friendly 4½-mile hike through State Park and MMWD lands is free and open to the public. Wear layers, sunscreen and comfortable shoes, and bring a picnic lunch, water, camera and don't forget your binocs!

DIRECTIONS: Meet at the Rock Spring parking area (near Mountain Theater). We will follow a 4½-mile loop to Mountain Theater and West Point Inn and back via Bootjack and Old Stage Road. Some hills. We will stop and picnic at West Point Inn. Sorry—no dogs.