NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

May—June 2014

New ways to participate in MCL

To address new or re-emerging issues, MCL has formed a new issue committee—Agricultural Land Use—and two working groups on Climate Change and Drought.

Agricultural Land Use will address issues formerly studied by an MCL Rural Land Use Committee. MCL members interested in joining the Committee and participating in planning events, such as the June 29 visit to the Nicasio Native Grass Ranch (see page 5), as well as examining current issues involving agriculture in Marin, should email the office at mcl@marinconservationleague.org. Committee co-chairs Judy Teichman and rancher Sally Gale are looking into holding meetings during other than normal business hours and using software that enables members to participate from a variety of locations. The first official meeting was scheduled for April 25. Watch MCL's E-bulletins for further information.

The former **Climate Action Committee** has been re-formed as a working group, pending expression of member interest in reestablishing a permanent Committee. Co-chairs

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Measure B

Permanent Farmers' Market?

Courtesy Williams Architecture

Artist's rendering of a proposed permanent Farmers' Market at the "Christmas Tree lot" near the Marin County Civic Center on Civic Center Drive.

by Judy Teichman and Nona Dennis

The popular Marin Farmers' Market has been operating on Thursdays and Sundays in the Marin Civic Center for more than 30 years. With some 230 stalls, it has grown significantly since it first opened in 1983 and is now the third largest farmers' market in California. The Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM) runs the market and has continued to provide an opportunity for local farmers, specialty food purveyors and artisans to connect with a community that savors seasonally fresh food. In 2008, MCL honored the Civic Center Farmers' Market with its John M. McPhail, Jr. Green Business Award for "creating a vibrant and successful local open air market."

AIM has been looking for a permanent home for a dozen years at East Marin sites ranging from Larkspur to St. Vincent's and Silveira Ranch. The search settled on the overflow parking lot (aka "Christmas Tree lot") at the Civic Center several years ago, but it has taken six years for the Board of Supervisors to support placing on a ballot a measure that would allow the Board to lease and/or license the lot for use as a permanent farmers market. In the meantime, land use in the area has undergone a number of changes, such as the future addition of a SMART Station in the immediate vicinity. Housing has also been proposed for the site by advocates for affordable housing, and new development in the vicinity has changed local traffic patterns.

Why a Ballot Measure?

In 1991, eighty-one acres of the Civic

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A Message from the President

The MCL Board and staff had their hands full putting things in place for our Annual Dinner and awards ceremony on April 11th. All 132 seats were spoken for nearly a month in advance, and this year we had many sponsors to thank. It was a remarkable 80th Anniversary celebration for MCL! We also had a wonderful group of award winners, who are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. If you know them or see them give them your congratulations. In a wide variety of ways, they all have given amazing service to the environment.

This continues to be a busy time for the organization. A new committee on Agricultural Land Use issues has been formed, along with two new "Working Groups," (see Page 1.) One will deal with the many challenges of climate change. and the other focus on issues associated with the current drought. If you are interested in participating in these efforts give MCL a call at 415-485-6257 or visit our website for meeting times, agendas, and locations.

Elections for the Board of Directors were held at the Annual Meeting, and we welcomed **Linda Novy**, who returns to the Board after a lengthy hiatus, **Kate Powers**, **Julia Violich**, and **Larry Minikes** to our Board. They bring energy and new ideas that are always welcome. New officers for the next year were also elected. I will continue to serve as President, supported by **Nona Dennis** as First Vice President, **Vicki Nichols** as Second Vice President, and **Judy Teichman** as Secretary. **Ken Drexler** will continue as Treasurer. We enter the New Year (organizationally speaking) with a full plate of issues and challenges to study, from Creek Protection, to Land Use (on many sites) and the ever present water and drought issues we all face. Get involved with your MCL organization; give us your wisdom and leadership. It will be a good time and you will be with great people, just like yourself.

As we go to press, I will be in Kathmandu, Nepal, participating in the Eighth International Conference on Community Based Adaptation (CBA8) to Climate Change. I look forward to sharing my experiences with you when I return."

Jon Elam

California State Parks Celebrates 150 years!

by Nona Dennis

Unlike a person's birthday, anniversaries of public parks can be more complicated, marked by a number of possible events—for example, the birth of the idea for the park, the signing of legislation or passage of a bond act to fund acquisition, when a park became operational, or when an organization was established to consolidate administration of all park land(s). In the case of California State Parks, all of these have been used at one time or another to commemorate significant anniversaries of the parks and sites that make up the present system. This year, California State Parks is celebrating its 150th Anniversary. Actually two anniversary dates—1864 and 1928—are especially noteworthy in the evolution of California's statewide park system.

The 150-year anniversary dates back to June 30, 1864 when, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill granting 39,000 acres of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove to the State of California. This historic legislation is counted as the beginning not only of California's state parks, but also of the national park idea we know today. Never before had land been set aside to protect its natural state for the public to enjoy. A timeline of state park developments since

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Maggie Osterburg/Flickr Creative Commons, 2012

A boy plays in the sand at Tomales Bay State Park, which turned sixty in 2012.

Status Updates

650 N. San Pedro Rd. saved for the herons

While the herons on North San Pedro Road were doing what herons do at this time of year, a large crowd of "Friends of the Herons" gathered on April 15 to share pizza and celebrate a victory that was long in coming but worth the considerable effort—the purchase of 14 acres by Heron Hill LLC, a group of anonymous donors, for the purpose of preserving the land from development. Details of the sale have not been made public, but Supervisor Susan Adams, whose District 1 includes the property, deserves a great deal of credit for working creatively with both community and developer. She said: "The purchase and protection of this land represents years of the community working to reduce impacts of any development at "650," now to be known as "Heron Hill."

San Pedro Ridge has been characterized as the only remaining "wildland" in East Marin

The property had been the subject of a succession of development proposals over the years, the most recent of which included entitlement for ten homes and two second units. Marin Conservation League does not wade into development proposals simply because they are opposed by a local neighborhood group. In this case, we recognized that the property had values that went beyond local, and the neighborhood was informed, organized, persistent, and, most important, constructive in their strategies. In comments at every stage of environmental and project review, MCL's interests focused on the values on the site and in its regional context. The property occupies a heavily wooded hillside that forms an extension of San Pedro Ridge, much of which is now appropriately in public ownership. (San Pedro Ridge has been characterized as the only remaining "wildland" in East Marin.) The property is some three miles from Highway 101 in an area where the suburban fringe of Santa Venetia transitions to rural-residential, then to open lands and marshes of Buck's Landing and China Camp State Park to the east. The low density of the neighborhood is consistent with its rural character. The crowding of buildings on the site would have permanently changed that character.

Blue Herons nesting at Heron Hill.

Steve Fisch

Lower portions of the site adjacent to San Pedro Road are by no means pristine—eucalyptus and broom have invaded over the years and remnants of former occupancy are strewn about. Eucalyptus trees, however, afford nesting habitat for great blue herons, and the less disturbed upper woodlands form a continuous canopy with San Pedro Ridge above. Preservation of this land from development will maintain a continuous wildlife corridor from the ridge almost to the wetlands of China Camp, even though the site is not directly contiguous to either the State Park or the County's San Pedro Ridge Open Space Preserve.

Purchase is an essential first step to prevent development of Heron Hill, but a number of questions are yet to be resolved. The land remains in private ownership. Will the new owners take responsibility for cleaning up junk and begin removal of invasive species while, at the same time, protecting the habitat of the herons? Who will manage the pond on the property and flow of surface water off-site onto adjacent properties—issues that arose in comments on the proposed development. And who will manage the land in the long term? While these questions are being negotiated, the community can rejoice that generous donors came forward with the vision and funds needed to protect the site from development into the future.

—Nona Dennis

Community matters—monitoring mitigation at Loch Lomond

The typical sequence for a proposed new development warranting an Environmental Impact Report is for the EIR to identify significant impacts and propose mitigation measures to avoid the impacts or reduce their significance. On certifying the Final EIR and approving the project, the lead agency—in the case of the Village at Loch Lomond Marina, the City of San Rafael —adopts a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP), as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The City translates mitigation measures into conditions of approval of the project, thereby ensuring that mitigation measures will be implemented and monitored, often for periods of five years or more.

Short-term, construction-related mitigation measures such as managing construction traffic, limiting construction noise, or controlling erosion and water quality are relatively easy to monitor by City inspectors, although the lengthy duration of construction—often years—can be disruptive to the neighboring community in spite of mitigation. Also, even with the City's good intentions, monitoring of longer-term mitigation measures can slip. Who

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Events

Felicia Marcus updates MCL on water policy and the drought at sell-out Annual Dinner April 11

Many thanks to the more than 130 people who attended Marin Conservation League's sold-out 2014 Annual Dinner on April 11th at the Key Room at Homeward Bound's New Beginnings Center in Hamilton. This year's event featured Felicia Marcus, Chair of the California State Water Resources Control Board as Keynote Speaker.

The evening was kicked off by MCL President Jon Elam, who welcomed guests to this annual event, which also serves as the election of Officers and Directors for the next term, as well as the award ceremony for our Annual Environment Awards.

Officers for the 2014—2015 term are: **Jon Elam**, President; **Nona Dennis**, 1st Vice President; **Vicki Nichols**, 2nd Vice President; **Judith Teichman**, Secretary; and **Ken Drexler**, Treasurer. **Jana Haehl** was elected to a new three-year term as director. Four new directors were named to the Board: **Larry Minikes**, **Julia Violich**, **Kate Powers** and **Linda Novy**. MCL is very grateful for the service of the departing board members: **Priscilla Bull, Fred Holden, David Schnapf** and **Chris Yalonis**.

MCL's 2014 Awards for Environmental Leadership were introduced by Linda Novy. Longtime San Geronimo Valley activist **Jean Berensmeier** was honored with the *Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Award* for her many years of leadership and dedication to the preservation of open space and biological diversity in Marin County.

MMWD Watershed Manager **Mike Swezy** received the *Marin Green Award for Environmental Leadership* for his success in creating a collaborative Mt. Tam land stewardship program in conjunction with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the land management agencies on Mt. Tam; and the *John M. McPhail, Jr. Green Business Award* went to **Nancy Scolari**, Executive Director of the Marin Resource Conservation District for her work in creating conservation projects on Marin ranchlands.

The *Ted Wellman Water Award* was given to the **Gallinas Watershed Council,** which has worked tirelessly towards helping connect residents with their watershed; and Branson School senior **Jolon Timms** received the Environmental Stewardship Award for his dedication to turning environmental concepts into practice.

Kelly + Yamamoto Productions received a special *Award for Environmental Achievement* for their production of the award-winning documentary film, "*Rebels With A Cause*." The Marin Conservation League *Volunteer of the Year Award* was given with gratitude to **Ann Thomas** for her many years of service to the Marin environmental community.

Raffle prize winners were **Bill Evers**, **Carol Fairchild, Randy Greenberg, Peter Hoch, Kathy Lowrey, Larry Smith** and **Wanden Treanor**.

MCL is grateful to Chair Nona Dennis' Annual Dinner Committee of **Doug Wilson, Pam Reaves, Jill Templeton** and **Ken Drexler** and to MCL staff **Dru Parker** and **Shannon Doherty**. Kudos to raffle prize gatherer extraordinaire **Vicki Nichols**, and to photographers **Greg Zitney**, **Craig Solin** and **Tom Moyer,** who donated their stunning nature photographs for the awards.

For more dinner photos see page 12.

Clockwise from top: Arlin Weinberger, Steve Stoft; Steven and Jean Berensmeier, Ken Drexler; Jon Elam, Nancy Scolari, Mark Haley; Kenji Yamamoto, Nancy Kelly

photos by Jana Haehl

ANNUAL DINNER RAFFLE & IN-KIND DONORS

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Tim & Liza Crosse, Friends of MCL, Linda J. Novy & Associates, Marin Sanitary Service, Seagate Properties

$125

Alliance for Local Sustainable Agriculture, Drakes Bay Oyster Co., Marin County Farm Bureau, Marin Municipal Water District, Toby's Feed Barn, Mimi and Stephen Lewis, Tomales Bay Oyster Co. Pt. Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co., West Marin Compost

Sunday, June 29—Nicasio Native Grass Ranch

Introducing Agricultural Environmentalism

by Judy Teichman

Did you know that agriculture can be a key to solving problems of drought and of global climate change due to too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere? And do it while producing the food and fiber we expect from agriculture? (See also MCL *Newsletter* November-December 2013: "West Marin ranchers address climate change").

You and your family and friends are invited to visit the **Nicasio Native Grass Ranch** on Sunday, June 29, and learn how compost applied to grasslands can remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and put it to beneficial use as organic matter in our soil. A morning program, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, will be open to all ages. Attendees are welcome to bring a picnic and a blanket or chair and enjoy an hour in the sun after the program. An afternoon program, from 2:00—4:00 p.m., will be geared to a more adult audience, folks that may want to stop by after a hike or lunch at Rancho Nicasio.

Thanks to work on the Native Grass Ranch supported by owners John Wick and Peggy Rathmann and a multitude of other local agricultural leaders and scientists, Marin is poised to lead the State, the country and the world in addressing climate change through range-based agriculture. For example, in the first year following one application of compost to each of several 2.5-acre research plots in Nicasio and in the Sierra Nevada foothills, the soil in each research plot sequestered at least 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide as beneficial soil carbon and retained up to 26,000 liters of water. This result from that one application of compost has been repeated in each of six years, and similar results are projected to continue for at least another 25 years The fact that Marin's agriculture is 90% range-based, similar to Sierra foothill ranges, makes these areas particularly suitable for carbon sequestration.

There are multiple aspects to agricultural environmentalism. The June 29 event will focus on the primary research into soil carbon sequestration from managing rangeland. Future events will focus on the production of durable goods, such as fiber for clothing, and the dyes used to color them. For example, indigo, an introduced crop, produces a beautiful nontoxic pigment that can be used for blue jeans. And one of Marin's worst weeds, wooly distaff thistle, makes lovely saffron colored pigment. Another event will explore compost itself, and why anything that was ever alive can and should be composted.

Look for the details of these and other visits to local ranches sponsored by MCL's new Agricultural Land Use Committee in MCL E-Bulletins.

The Nicasio Native Grass Ranch is at 4499 Nicasio Valley Road (Nicasio Land Company.) From 101, take Lucas Valley Road west and turn right on Nicasio Valley Road into Nicasio. Follow signs.

photo courtesy John Wick

MCL Business Member Profile

Perry's Art Supplies & Framing, San Anselmo

By Linda Novy

When I interviewed Perry Paradiso I discovered more than the green products he offers at his art supply and framing store. I learned his reason for joining the MCL. Perry loves Marin's beautiful open spaces, and has always had a deeply rooted desire to see them protected. He put his faith in the MCL and its leadership in the early 1990s and has been a business member ever since. In our interview, I also discovered that Perry has played a significant role in directly protecting open space. In 1996, Hawthorne Canyon, near Perry's home, was threatened with development. This 22 acre tract of pristine wooded hills nestled between Fairfax and San Anselmo, was always considered a public park, but was in fact, privately owned. Alerted by Jonathan Braun, an open space advocate serving on San Anselmo's Open Space Committee, Perry learned that this wild place might disappear. He sprung into action: Perry and his wife, Shirley, gathered neighbors on their porch to develop a game plan with Jonathan's help. The result: the neighborhood helped raise the necessary money to acquire the land, and garnered support from other agencies to complete the acquisition in 1999. Now, Hawthorne Canyon is part of San Anselmo's Open Space lands and protected forever.

Perry Paradiso

Jonathan Braun, still serving on San Anselmo Open Space Committee, and also on the Marin Open Space Trust Board of Directors, says: "Hawthorne Canyon is a shining example of community cooperation. Perry and his neighbors were great partners in the extraordinary effort that has resulted in saving a gem of a park." Perry modestly denies taking much credit for this accomplishment, but is proud that this land was saved. Perry's role as the "spark" that ignited others to take action, and his strong belief this land needed to be saved, resulted in a conservation success story. Thank you Perry!

At Perry's store, there is a real feeling of creative potential! Family-owned and operated at this location for over 50 years, the store offers many "green" products. Perry told me that the National Art Materials Trade Association is moving the industry in a sustainable product direction. Some of the sustainable products that Perry's stocks include drawing pads made with recycled paper, recycled paper portfolio covers and framing mats, sustainably grown and harvested wood frames, and more! Perry said that "Artists, in general, are very conscious of the environment, and Marin's landscape beauty is a wonderful source of inspiration." Besides being ardent recyclers, Perry and his staff are a great resource for their customers, winning the Pacific Sun's "Best of Marin" in 2009.

Perry asked me to tell MCL: "Keep up the good work and perpetuate the legacy of environmental protection!" You too, Perry! Look for Perry at his store, or with his wife, Shirley, hiking in Hawthorne Canyon!

New committees *from page 1*

Pamela Reaves and Doug Wilson are shaping a possible agenda, but in general the group will track climate issues from the standpoints of both mitigation (of greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (to climate change). The group will determine a regular meeting time and all will be invited to attend.

The Water and Watershed Committee has formed a "Drought" working group with a specific focus on current water supply, conservation, and other drought-related issues. Ann Thomas and Priscilla Bull, co-chairs of Water and Watershed, are also co-chairing the group, which is meeting on an ad hoc basis.

For more information on MCL Committes, including meeting agendas and minutes, visit:

marinconservationleague.org/about-us/issues-committees.html.

Want to receive your newsletter by email? Just let us know: Email mcl@marinconservationleague.org with "Email Only" in the subject line.

State Parks *from page 2*

1864 can be viewed at a special website devoted to this sesquicentennial year at 150.parks.ca.gov.

Although Yosemite started the California park system, by the end of the 19th century, homesteaders and excessive visitors had taken their toll in the Valley, and the federal cavalry gained control of Yosemite. In 1906, at the urging of John Muir and others, President Theodore Roosevelt signed a bill that transferred full control to the federal government, making Yosemite America's third national park.

At the same time, the State was engaged in acquiring other lands. In the years after 1864, many important sites of cultural and natural resource value were threatened by development, logging, or other destruction.

Courtesy Olmsted National Historic Site, NPS.

Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., designed New York's Central Park and first surveyed Yosemite Valley after its acquisition by the State in 1864, broadened the Olmsted legacy with his groundbreaking 20th century work in urban and environmental planning, natural resources conservation, park management, and landscape architecture. He was commissioned by the State of California in 1928 to conduct a survey of possible park sites statewide.

Sutter's Sawmill at Coloma, site of James Marshall's discovery of gold, was put forward for state or private protection. The giant redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains, caught in a flurry of logging destruction, led to the formation of the Sempervirens Club and that club's eventual acquisition of 3,808 acres of virgin redwoods that later became Big Basin Redwoods State Park, now California's oldest State Park. More ancient redwoods threatened by logging on the North Coast spurred formation of Save the Redwoods League in 1918, and its campaign to save Humboldt Redwoods led to similar campaigns to save other groves of old-growth redwoods along the coast and major coastal rivers. By the late 1920s, 14 state parks and historic sites were being managed by a variety of different administrative bodies and commissions.

1928, the second anniversary date, does not stand out in State Parks' historic timeline, but for Marin County it does. Save the Redwoods League is credited with spearheading the effort to centralize governance of these public sites, but they had in Marin County strong allies, and their joint efforts led to the establishment of an organized system of state parks, under the administration of a new Division of Parks in the Department of Natural Resources.

Here in Marin County in the mid1920s, the Tamalpais Conservation Club and others were engaged in the battles that would eventually secure the initial lands for a "Tamalpais Park." In a detailed chronology, Barry Spitz, author of *To Save a Mountain: The 100-Year Battle for Mt. Tamalpais,* describes the saga that eventually led to the signing of legislation on May 25, 1927, that created Tamalpais State Park. Spitz notes that the official sign for Mt. Tamalpais State Park gives 1928 as its "birth" date, when that legislation became effective. The year 1930, when the Park became operational, has also been suggested as the date of birth.

In the same year—1927—three important companion bills were signed. One of them fulfilled the dream of consolidation by establishing the Division of Parks within the Department of Natural Resources. The second companion bill approved a $6 million bond measure for land acquisition to be placed on the state ballot for the following year. It passed by a 3:1 vote in November, 1928, thereby funding the new Division of Parks. Finally, the third companion bill budgeted $15,000 for noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to conduct a statewide survey of potential park sites. The success of these three key measures marked the birth of state parks as a consolidated system. To commemorate that date, State Parks celebrated a 50-year Golden Anniversary in 1978.

The rest is history . . .

Whether California State Parks is 150 years old this year, or, as a park system, 86 years old, depends on which birth date, 1864 or 1928, one celebrates. Regardless of the date, since their beginning California's state parks have continued to evolve as one after another special place has been identified by people, envisioned as a public treasure, then fought over for years and even decades to gain permanent protection. Now responsible for almost one-third of California's scenic coastline, the California State Park system includes 280 parks, beaches, trails, wildlife areas, open spaces, off-highway vehicle areas, and historic sites. It consists of approximately 1.59 million acres, including over 339 miles of coastline, 974 miles of lake, reservoir and river frontage, approximately 15,000 campsites and alternative camping facilities, and 4,456 miles of non-motorized trails. A success story by any measure.

Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan

By Jana Haehl

A controversial vision plan for intensive future development of the Larkspur Landing and eastern Greenbrae areas will be the subject of a public hearing by the Larkspur City Council on May 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hall Middle School gymnasium at 200 Doherty Drive. The purpose is to receive comments on the environmental impacts of the proposed plan.

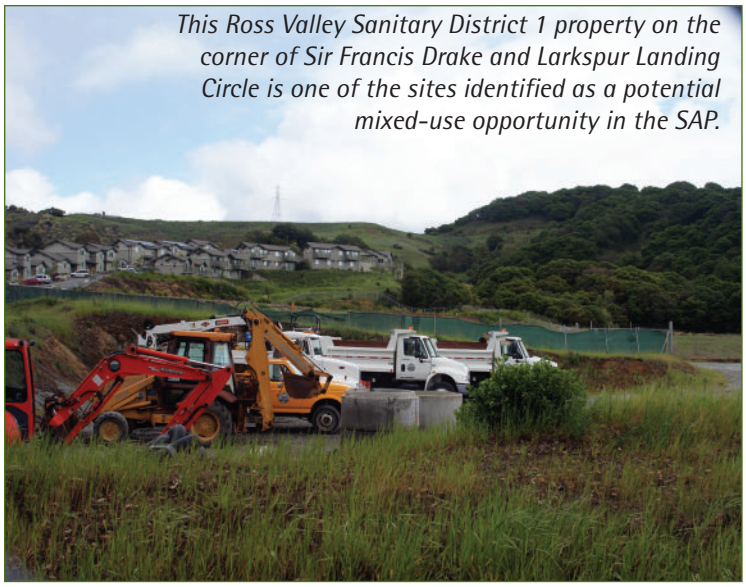
The Draft Station Area Plan (SAP) is a long-range vision plan that provides numerous recommendations for amending the Larkspur General Plan, zoning ordinance, and other applicable City policies, to allow the range of development envisioned in the Draft SAP.

Public hearing: Thursday, May 22, 6:30 p.m., Hall Middle School, Larkspur

The City of Larkspur applied for and received a grant of $480,000 from ABAG/MTC in 2011 to fund the planning process for the Draft SAP. Planning was guided largely by ABAG's consultant team for land use, urban design, and transportation. Additional consultants were specialists in real estate marketing, engineering, and cost estimating.

To set the context, SMART's proposed station in Larkspur would be located within the railroad right-of-way near the entrance to the Cal Park Tunnel. Seven 'opportunity sites' within a half-mile of the proposed station, in areas both north and south of Corte Madera Creek, are identified in the Draft SAP for potential mixed-use opportunities related to the existing commercial, office, and ferry terminal sites, along with residential land uses. Residential development would fall within a range of 20 to 35 dwelling units per acre (du/ac), which is the minimum density range that can be considered for 'transit supportive' development.

The Draft SAP focuses on the upper range of residential density at 35 du/ac (not including affordable housing density bonuses) for housing that is projected to occur over a 20-year period to the year 2035. This eventually could yield 920 new residential dwelling units at Larkspur Landing. Also recommended in the Draft SAP are an additional 39,500 square feet (sf) for office and public use, 60,000 sf for a new hotel, and 77,500 sf for new retail use.



This Ross Valley Sanitary District 1 property on the corner of Sir Francis Drake and Larkspur Landing Circle is one of the sites identified as a potential mixed-use opportunity in the SAP.

Dru Parker

The Draft SAP proposes two-to-five story buildings in the Larkspur Landing sub-area north of Corte Madera Creek, but suggests limiting the height of buildings to two-to-four stories in the Redwood Highway sub-area south of the Creek.

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) that had been appointed in 2010 to provide direction during Larkspur's General Plan update process was given responsibility for responding to the consultants' ideas for developing the Draft SAP. If and when approved, the SAP would be appended to the General Plan.

The SAP poses numerous environmental impacts

During seven public meetings in 2012 and 2013, members of the CAC raised concerns about the proposed density, traffic, parking, changes to existing uses, neighborhood character, flooding, and adequacy of mitigations, among other issues. Among these, traffic and parking stand out as particularly problematic.

Although traffic congestion on East Sir Francis Drake is already a serious problem that is expected to worsen in the foreseeable future, the Draft SAP does not include adding traffic capacity to accommodate the increased density being proposed.

Instead, the Draft SAP proposes to address the traffic congestion and parking problems by introducing the concepts of traffic demand management, shared parking, and parking demand management. These include vehicular trip caps for the area, ramp metering, and shared parking strategies, as well as a Transportation Management Association with an onsite manager to implement controls and pricing.

The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District has proposed constructing a four-story transit-parking structure within the SAP area, on the present site of the Marin Airporter, to accommodate a variety of paid-parking needs, including those generated by Marin Airporter.

Since both the Larkspur Landing and the Redwood Highway sub-areas of the Draft SAP are within the Route 24 commute bus service provided by Golden Gate Transit, neither parking nor aesthetics can be considered to have significant impacts on the environment in the EIR, according to

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Larkspur SAP *from page 8*

criteria recently established by passage of California Senate Bill 743 last year.

Public opposes the scope and scale of the Plan

After seven meetings of the CAC, there was not a consensus in favor of the plan now being advanced as the Draft SAP. At the final meeting of the CAC, on June 17, 2013, the vote was 7 in favor of the preferred plan; 3 in favor of a reduced development plan; and 4 in favor of no additional development beyond that currently approved.

Indications are that public opposition to the scope and scale of the plan may persuade the Larkspur City Council to reject it in favor of a different plan featuring less density and giving more attention to realistically addressing the ongoing problems of traffic congestion, parking, flooding, and potential water shortages.

Documents for public review

Environmental impacts, possible mitigations and alternatives are analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan (LSSAP).

Email comments to lk_planning@ cityoflarkspur.org by June 2

In addition to oral comments on the adequacy of the DEIR received at the May 22 hearing, written public comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. on June 2, 2014.

Printed copies of the LSSAP, DEIR, and Appendix—a total 1901 pages—are available at most public libraries and city halls. Digital copies of the documents can be downloaded in PDF format at larkspurcityhall.org/index.aspx?nid=157.

Comments on the merits of the Draft Station Area Plan itself may be submitted at any time. Written comments on either the DEIR or merits of the Plan can be sent by e-mail to lk_planning@city oflarkspur.org or mailed to Neal Toft, Planning and Building Director, City of Larkspur, 400 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur CA 94939.

Farmer's Market *from page 1*

Center site were designated as a National Historic Landmark. At that time, design guidelines were established to address the County's responsibility with regard to the site's unique status and to provide the County with guidance regarding potential future developments and site improvements. The Landmark site encompasses main Civic Center buildings and those parts of the Civic Center campus that are bounded by North San Pedro Road, Civic Center Drive north to Avenue of the Flags, and west to U.S. 101. A Marin Civic Center Open Space Ordinance was approved in 1992 with the intent of preserving the aesthetic quality of the Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center buildings by preventing the construction of any building (over 250 square feet and incidental to operations) on the designated campus without prior approval by a majority vote of the County electorate. The ordinance does not impede the placement of temporary structures or seasonal activities, such as for Christmas tree sales, the County Fair, or weekly farmers' market.

The proposed site for a permanent Farmers' Market is included within the ordinance boundaries. Thus AIM has had to engage in considerable negotiation with Supervisors even to obtain a place on the ballot. The next step is to get a simple majority of voters to approve of establishing a permanent market in the Civic Center. If Measure B is successful, AIM will face more challenges in developing a plan, designing the facility, and undergoing an environmental impact report, a process that will lie within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors, not the County Planning Commission.

As envisioned by AIM, the project would include a permanent year-round facility to provide infrastructure for the Thursday and Sunday markets, which would be relocated from the parking areas that it currently occupies. A permanent building would house retail shops featuring locally sourced Marin products such as meats and fish, cheese and dairy, as well as a restaurant. Offices, meeting rooms, a commercial kitchen and demonstration garden would support development of a model sustainable food system.

Design for the market is in early stages

"Help the Marin Farmers' Market Take Root!"

awaiting voter approval of Measure B. AIM and County staff are working with the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy to ensure that the design would respect and be consistent with the landmark Civic Center building. The sustainability goal is to meet "gold" or "platinum" level LEED-certified Green Building standards.

The estimated cost of the project is around $10 million, including $1 million that AIM has committed to paying the County toward a permanent parking area. Eighty to ninety percent of AIMS annual revenues of $1.8 million comes from vendor fees. AIM is in the early stages of raising funds for the venture, pending voter approval. Their slogan for the Measure B campaign: "Help the Marin Farmers' Market Take Root!"

The Sunday Farmers' Market in its temporary location in the Civic Center parking lot.

Agricultural Institute of Marin

Status updates *from page 3*

will track whether a wetland mitigation plan, for example, has been successful five years from now, or whether the future homeowners association has indeed carried out obligations stipulated in the MMRP to protect sensitive wildlife by restricting dogs to leash or prohibiting cats from going outside?

As the Village at Loch Lomond Marina begins to take shape over the next couple of years, it is unlikely that any mitigation measures will slip, thanks to the diligence of the San Pedro Road Coalition and its specially appointed committee assigned to watch-dog the development.

Construction-related mitigation measures at Loch Lomond Marina include the installation of temporary silt fencing to protect the wetland nesting area.

Dru Parker

Community issues

Application for a mixed-use "Village" community consisting of a residential complex of 84 (since reduced to 81) units, market, and commercial business and marina-use buildings on the site of the Loch Lomond Marina on Pt. San Pedro Road was first filed with the City in 2005. By 2007, Draft and Final Environmental Impact Reports had been completed and certified and the project received its approvals. Along the way, dozens of neighborhood and homeowner association meetings and public hearings were held, bringing together the Pt. San Pedro Road community to protest or support, to request revisions to the plan, and/or generally engage in the process. The development would mean a dramatic and unwelcome change to the laid-back live-aboard marina community and the neighbors who shop at the market and walk their dogs across open land and out along the breakwater. It also threatened to disrupt areas of tidal and seasonal wetlands that still remain after Loch Lomond and its yacht harbor were developed in 1956, the marsh and bay portion filled with dirt from higher elevations.

While a main concern was the addition of more traffic to the often-congested Pt. San Pedro Road corridor, especially where it enters central San Rafael in the area of the future SMART station, others worried about the disturbance to California clapper rail in the tidal marsh and loss of feeding grounds and high-tide refuge for herons and egrets that nest on near-by Marin islands. This was one of MCL's primary reasons for becoming involved and commenting on the 2006-2007 Draft and Final EIRs—to ensure that a conservation area plan would protect these sensitive resources. (A Wetland Mitigation Plan was adopted that laid out an interpretive path and signage, delineated a small wetland area to be filled and a compensatory expansion of seasonal wetland, weed removal and revegetation, temporary silt fencing during construction, and long-term fencing to restrict human and dog intrusion into wetlands.)

Almost 10 years later, after a change in project ownership, the first phase of construction got underway in late 2013. Drainage "wicks" had been installed and large quantities of fill material had been piled over the construction area to surcharge the underlying bay mud, i.e., accelerate consolidation and achieve a stable building elevation. By late February 2014, a construction fence had been erected along the perimeter of the wetlands to protect them from the construction work, and remediation of contaminated soils near the service station site and dry cleaning establishment had begun. The expanse of fill now looks bleak—but is temporary. Utilities are in the early stages of installation.

San Pedro Road Coalition acts

The San Pedro Road Coalition has been keeping close track of the work from the beginning, regularly updating a web site to provide timely information to the community on conditions at the Marina related to the project and to public access. In brief, the Coalition has urged the City and the Marina to take actions to protect the conservation area during construction, including installation of barriers and other protective procedures and placement of informational signs around the seasonal wetlands advising people that ordinances protect the area since it is a nesting ground. The Coalition is conducting oversight on behalf of the neighborhood communities of any demolition, preparation, surcharge and construction of the Village project, as well as tracking any constraints caused by the project to public access and use of the shoreline and marina. In these regards, the Coalition is acting as liaison between the local community and the City of San Rafael, the marina property owners and other construction-related entities and will bring to their attention any violations of permit conditions and legitimate concerns related to negative impacts (such as noise or dust) on surrounding neighborhoods and will work to resolve those issues.

In the often protracted course of planning and implementation of major projects, rarely does a project receive this level of community interest and constructive engagement! There are still years ahead for the Coalition's continued attention as the "new" Village reaches occupancy and begins to fit into its environment. Hopefully as this happens, the sensitive resources that have made this site special will emerge intact!

—Nona Dennis

Continued on page 11

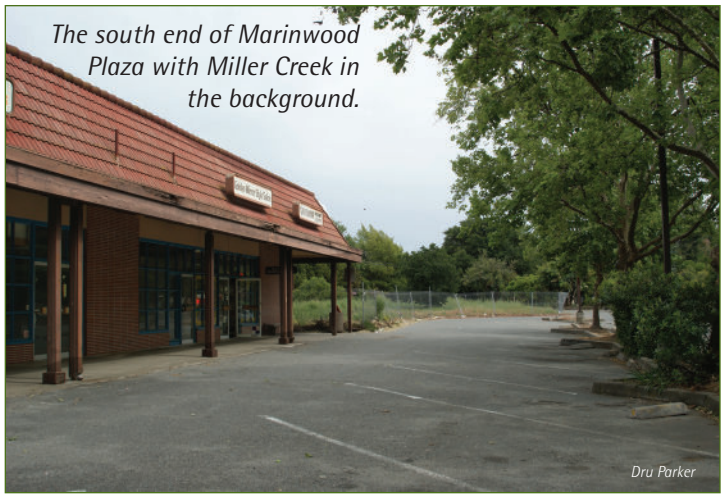
Status Updates *from page 10*

Marinwood Plaza redevelopment begins environmental review

No affordable housing project is easy in Marin. Yet the County can boast numerous attractive projects that did succeed and have blended into their respective neighborhoods, but only after years of planning, neighborhood debate, and starts and stops in a shifting economy. The Marinwood Village project, which proposes a mixed-use complex of small retail, restaurant, grocery store, and up to 82 residential units, 72 of them affordable, faces a rough road ahead. The project had its "official" start of the environmental review process at a well-attended community meeting on March 29. As a collaborative "vision plan" for redeveloping the small commercial center, however, the proposal goes back a number of years. Marinwood Plaza was designated as a Housing Opportunity site in the 2007 Countywide Plan.

Much of the problem lies in timing. Marin communities have been energized in the past few years by the "One Bay Area" regional planning process, whose growth forecasts and public outreach did not sit well. Second, the County's recently-approved Housing Element targeted three sites in Marinwood and Lucas Valley, including Grady Ranch and lands of St. Vincent's and Silveira Ranch, as well as Marinwood Plaza, placing a substantial burden on the Marinwood community to meet the County's State regional housing requirements. Recent developments elsewhere in the County have prompted speculation about impacts of affordable housing on schools and crime. Then there is concern over "density" represented by 180 housing units taking shape on the former "WinCup" site in Corte Madera, visible to all who pass on 101. Just up the highway, Larkspur has unveiled a Draft EIR for a SMART Station Area Plan that envisions more than 900 residential units, a hotel, and other commercial facilities.

Marinwood Plaza is basically a redevelopment project of an existing site that needs rejuvenation, plus affordable housing. MCL supports this in concept. The current proposal by BRIDGE Housing adheres fairly closely to the principles of the earlier "vision plan": a walkable, neighborhood-serving residential-retail village concept with grocery store, small local-serving businesses like postal annex, beauty shop, small office spaces, and housing for up to 80-some families. Plans show three-story affordable housing complexes in three discrete buildings, with facades articulated to break up massing. A fourth complex, separated from the others, would contain 10 market-rate units.


The south end of Marinwood Plaza with Miller Creek in the background.

Dru Parker

Environmental review

The questions being asked by residents are "what" and "how much?" And how will environmental impacts be mitigated? Will alternatives be considered in the Environmental Impact Report? These are legitimate questions. **Aesthetics**: The existing plaza has not been maintained and needs rejuvenation, but new buildings will significantly change the appearance of the area. That should be shown in before-and-after simulations in the EIR. **Biological Resources:** Miller Creek, flows past the southern end of the property before passing under 101 and continuing through Silveira ranch and into baylands. It is the only perennial stream in eastern Marin County that has relatively intact riparian areas. With the exception of a reach in the baylands, Miller Creek is not channelized, and it supports habitat for the threatened steelhead and other fish species. The aim in managing Miller Creek is to enhance habitat connectivity along the full length of the creek (from its headwaters on Big Rock Ridge) and out to the marshlands of the bay. The project should contribute to this objective by protecting water quality and restoring the creek as possible.

The Marinwood community raised other issues at the March 29 meeting: the **Hazardous Materials** section of the EIR should explain the extent and status of remediation of a contaminated groundwater plume originating from a former dry cleaner site in the Plaza that has migrated under Highway 101 onto the Silveira property. It is currently being monitored by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Since the affordable housing complexes will be situated fairly close to both Miller Creek Road onramp to 101 and the highway itself, both **Noise and Air Quality** (Toxic Air contaminants, or TACs) will need careful study and mitigation in choice of building materials and other standard practices. Housing advocates frequently claim that automobile-related greenhouse gases will be significantly reduced by taking new residents who might otherwise continue to commute from outside Marin off the road. This needs to be carefully calculated in the EIR to determine whether this offset is a valid assumption in relation to the emissions from existing traffic congestion on 101. Will compact growth near public transit really reduce overall vehicle miles, or is the reality going to be longer delays on 101 at peak periods of the day? The impact of affordable housing on property tax-based funding of Dixie School District and other *Public Services* is of particular concern to the community.

These and other issues will be addressed in the Draft EIR, which is expected to take a number of months to complete before being released to the public. Over the coming year, there will be numerous opportunities for the community to comment on the Final EIR and on the merits of the project. *—Nona Dennis*

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Issues Committee Meeting Schedule (subject to change)

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

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

Water and Watersheds: 4th Thurs. of the month, 4:00- 5:30 PM, San Rafael Corporate Center

Agricultural Land Use; North Marin Unit; Climate: Vary, check website

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

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Annual Dinner sells out again!

Clockwise from top left: Jody and Jolon Timms, David Weinsoff, Silver Clark; Art and Elaine Reichert; Jon Elam, Ann Thomas; Felicia Marcus, Vicki Nichols, Susan and Mike Swezy, Doug Wilson, Colin Lind.

Story and more photos on page 4.

photos by Jana Haehl