NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

March—April 2014

State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus to speak at MCL's Annual Dinner April 11

Marin Conservation League is honored to have **Felicia Marcus**, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, as guest speaker for the Annual Dinner on April 11th.

Ms. Marcus has followed an unusual career path that has put her both on the outside of government as an environmental activist, and on the inside, working for a Department of Public Works, the EPA, and now the State Board.

She grew up in the San Fernando Valley before heading east to Harvard University, where she earned a B.A. degree in East Asian Studies in 1977. She received her J.D. in 1983 from New York University School of Law. Ms.

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Felicia Marcus

Point Reyes National Seashore

Tule Elk and the Ranch Plan

Tule elk bulls west of Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

photo courtesy Point Reyes National Seashore

Thousands of visitors to Pt. Reyes National Seashore (PRNS, or "Seashore") have seen tule elk roaming in wilderness lands at Tomales Point at the north end of the Pt. Reyes peninsula. The elk have been an attraction to the Seashore since a few individuals of the once abundant native elk populations in California were reintroduced to the Seashore in 1978. Since then the herd at Tomales Pt. has grown to an average but fluctuating population of about 450 individuals.

In an effort to manage the size of the herd at Tomales Point, the Seashore prepared a Tule Elk Management Plan and Environmental Assessment in 1998. Alternative A called for relocating some of the herd to Limantour on a trial basis to establish a free-ranging herd. According to the Seashore's 2001 Year in Review, 28 elk were released into the Limantour Beach area in the Philip Burton Wilderness on June 1 of that year.

Within two years, however, elk began migrating out of the Wilderness area and into the pastoral zone of the Seashore surrounding Drakes Estero, in effect, establishing a third herd. By 2004 there were 15 elk in the pastoral zone. At last count the free roaming elk numbered 74, were competing with livestock for forage and water and, in general, imposing economic hardship on the affected ranches. A Ph.D. dissertation completed in 2010 estimated that, if unchecked, the "new" herd could reach almost 400 by 2018 (McCrea Andrew Cobb, "Spatial Ecology and Population Dynamics of Tule Elk at PRNS, U.C. Berkeley).

These facts and concerns came to the attention of Marin Conservation

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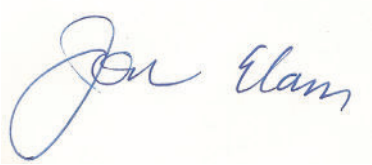
A Message from the President

As 2014 got started, January was a busy month for the MCL staff and volunteer Board. We submitted a letter of comment to the National Park Service concerning the scope of an Environmental Assessment that will cover several alternative approaches for solving parking and traffic congestion issues at the ever-popular Muir Woods. We analyzed impacts of a controversial Draft Road and Trail Management Plan and commented on a Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan, both the products of several years' staff effort and extensive public outreach by the Marin County Parks Department. As with all comments and analyses that MCL submits to public agencies, these documents are posted on our web site for members and others to review and prompt their thoughts. One of the most important things MCL does is to review and critique public documents and actions. Our long record of constructive input to public decisions is recognized by officials and leaders throughout the County and has given MCL a reputation for being thoughtful, articulate, and dedicated—a reputation of which we are very proud.

The Board also held a day-long retreat in late January to examine our present practices, confront the challenges of MCL in the future, and consider what we can do to keep the organization relevant and effective for our Board, our members, and for the government organizations and larger public who have come to count on MCL as an articulate "guardian" of Marin's environment.

This is MCL's 80th year! It is an important milestone to celebrate, and our Annual Dinner on April 11th will do just that. We urge you to come and enjoy one another, honor the recipients of awards for exceptional environmental achievements, and be inspired by our outstanding keynote speaker Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. You will also have an opportunity to vote on and welcome four new members of the MCL Board, and express appreciation to the three whose terms are expiring this year. With some planned turnover, we constantly bring new ideas, energy, and interests to MCL. Perhaps this is something that one day will interest you.

I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming committee meetings or at our Annual Dinner. Thanks again for your continued support and interest in MCL!



Tule elk *from page 1*

League recently. They raise important and complicated questions: What can be done with the free roaming elk in the *short term* to stem the economic losses of the ranchers? Should free roaming elk be allowed to remain in the pastoral zone, and if so, how should they be managed by the Seashore in the *long term*? Should steps be taken to make the wilderness area habitats more "hospitable" to the tule elk in the long run? Or should some elk be moved to other wilderness areas off the Seashore? To learn more about both short-term and longer-term issues, MCL convened two meetings of the Land Use/Transportation and Parks/Open Space Committees on the subject.

Tule elk released into the Limantour Beach area of the Wilderness in 2001 have since migrated into the pastoral zone.

Stephanie Larson, Director of U.C. Cooperative Extension, Sonoma County, has been working with the Seashore ranchers for several years. She met with the MCL Land Use/Transportation Committee in December, 2013, and recounted her concerns over the threat of the expanding elk herd to the economic viability of the Seashore ranches and to the regional agricultural economy if the Seashore ranches fail. The drought that has embraced most of California has exacerbated that threat.

To increase understanding of the issues, MCL convened a second, joint meeting of the Land Use/Transportation and Parks and Open Space Committees in January, 2014, to hear from the Seashore staff. About 30 people attended the second meeting, including representatives from the Pt. Reyes Seashore Ranchers Association (PRSRA), representatives from UC Cooperative Extension and offices of Supervisor Steve Kinsey, Assemblymember Marc Levine, and Congressman Jared Huffman. Cicely Muldoon, PRNS Superintendent, outlined a two-year Ranch Planning and Environmental Assessment process that is just getting underway. David Press, PRNS wildlife biologist, focused on measures the Seashore is taking now to manage the elk and reduce damage to ranch operations in the short-term. And ranchers from the PRSRA voiced their concerns over ongoing competition with livestock for limited forage and water and other damage to the ranches.

Seashore Ranch Plans

Superintendent Muldoon reported that the Seashore will initiate the Ranch Plan and hold official scoping meetings for the EA in March. While elk management is a central component of that Plan, it will be comprehensive in addressing the extension of dairy and other ranch leases to 20 years,

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Status Updates

Composting at Redwood Landfill

Redwood Landfill and Recycling Center proposed a revised compost operation in 2013. The County Department of Environmental Health Services is the lead permitting agency and held public meetings on the proposal. The County sent the request to the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), which supported the plan, as did MCL. On December 30, 2013, the permit was issued to the Landfill. The revised methodology for composting should reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

—Susan Stompe

North-South Greenway

In anticipation of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) approval of Regional Measure 2 funding for Phase Two of the Central Marin Ferry Connection Project (CMFCP), members of MCL's Land Use Committee recently walked the site proposed for the multi-use path known as the North-South Greenway, which is a key feature of CMFCP Phase Two.

The MCL group walked the entire route, carrying maps with the engineering drawings for Phase Two overlaid on aerial photos of the area which is behind the Larkspur Plaza shopping center where Cost Plus and Trader Joe's are located.

The 12-foot-wide multi-use path is proposed to be located west of the levee that once supported the train tracks on this 150-foot-wide former railroad right-of-way that was taken over by the Golden Gate Bridge District and is now owned by SMART. The marshes of the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve are on the opposite side of the levee and the North-South Greenway multi-use path would not intrude on them.

The proposed Greenway would occupy a narrow portion of the former railroad right-of-way that has long been developed and is now leased to tenants of SMART who operate a junked vehicle storage yard, a tow-truck parking lot, a cement company, and a mobile home park.

Dru Parker

The proposed Greenway would be constructed in a straight line that straddles the grassy slope between the railroad right-of-way and the mobile home park driveway, at left in photo below. The junked vehicles (left) belonging to a tow yard currently leasing the property would be removed.

This segment of the North-South Greenway would eventually connect the Sandra Marker Trail that ends at Tamal Vista Drive in Corte Madera with the Cal Park Tunnel in Larkspur. Completion of CMFCP Phase Two would extend it along Wornum Drive in Corte Madera, continue over the 'Detour Curve' right-of-way, and follow the multi-use path west of the levee as far as the abandoned trestle that once crossed over Corte Madera Creek.

Since a new crossing is not being funded at this time, cyclists and pedestrians would need to go west at that point to the Old Redwood Hwy frontage road and cross the creek on an improved path attached to the existing Industrial Way off-ramp that goes to East Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) expects to complete engineering and environmental review for CMFCP Phase Two within the next two years. *—Jana Haehl*

Angel Island-Tiburon Ferry: Will a Family Business Endure?

It is not new "news" that the State Department of Parks and Recreation is engaged in a public bidding process for water transport to Angel Island State Park. A crowd of 100 loyal Angel Island-Tiburon Ferry supporters met with State Parks officials on January 16 at Mill Valley Community Center. They came to laud the McDonogh family, which, for fifty years and five generations, has been transporting visitors to Angel Island State Park. When Angel Island became a State Park they received a long-term contract that expired in 1992. Since then they have been operating under a month-to-month agreement. By law the state must accept open bidding for a new contract of 10 years.

Comments on the Angel Island Ferry RFP may be sent to Danita Rodriguez at California State Parks

Anything that concerns Angel Island is of interest to MCL. The 788-foot Mt. Livermore is named for MCL's intrepid co-founder, Caroline Livermore, who led efforts to acquire the Island after the military declared it surplus. MCL is also concerned that State Parks is moving toward a more entrepreneurial park model in which the ability to raise funds—from parking, entry, concessions, etc.—is increasingly seen as essential to a Park's economic sustainability.

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Status updates *from page 3*

Visitors to Angel Island have steadily declined, although ferries from Tiburon transport around 62,000 visitors per year. Tiburon is a logical portal to Angel Island, but the McDonoghs could be outbid.

State Parks first prepared a Request for Proposals for the contract in 2008. At that time, a crowd of over 75 people packed the Tiburon Town Hall, ostensibly to provide input to drafting the RFP. Instead, they voiced their concerns over the threat of losing the McDonogh family's longtime ferry operation and the possibility of shifting the route to another locale. The RFP was not issued. Six years later, the crowd who convened in Mill Valley came to cheer for the ferry company and blast State Parks. Speakers praised the McDonogh family for their contributions to the Tiburon community. Many remembered that Capt. Maggie McDonogh had ferried more than 1,200 firefighters to fight a fire on Angel Island in 2008.

At the meeting, Parks officials outlined a 100-point system to frame the RFP and evaluate bids, divided among: experience, interpretive plan, facilities and operational plans, and financial commitments such as concession rent to the State. The "incumbent," they said, would receive an extra 5 points, to which the crowd shouted "Give them at least 10"! Officials promised to factor in public concerns and written suggestions as they draft the RFP.

Developing the new RFP will take between four and six months. Once the RFP is complete, it will be posted on the Parks' website and all interested parties notified. The successful bidder will be selected in early 2015. Send comments care of Danita Rodriguez, Marin District Superintendent, Caifornia State Parks, at drodriguez@parks.ca.gov.

Tim Rosenfeld

The Angel Island *is the Angel-Island Tiburon Ferry Company's open-air vessel.*

Gnoss Field runway extension

Gnoss Field, Marin County's airport, has had an approved master plan since 1997. The Countywide Plan in 2007 anticipated extending the existing 3300-foot runway by 1100 feet to create a 4400 runway to accommodate "critical aircraft," but the environmental effects were not studied at that time.

In 2008, the County and FAA initiated the process of producing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the impacts of the 1100-foot extension. MCL has commented at every step in a long and convoluted process of satisfying both County and federal environmental requirements (See MCL January-February 2012, and January-February 2014 *Newsletters*).

The Final EIR was released for public comment last November, and the Board of Supervisors certified the document on February 11 but left open the possibility of reducing the runway length at the hearing on the project merits later in the summer. The Final EIS has not yet been made public. Pursuant to federal procedures, however, there will be no opportunity for further public comment on the Final EIS. We anticipate that the County will hold a hearing on the merits of the extension project in June.

MCL continues to have concerns about the effects the extension might have on changing the composition of the aircraft fleet that could be accommodated by the extension, and the adequacy of proposed mitigation measures for the impact of filling wetlands.

—Susan Stompe

County's Red-Tape Committee nears the finish line

Almost two years have elapsed since the Marin County Board of Supervisors directed staff of the Community Development Agency (CDA) to form a Regulatory Improvements Advisory Committee (RIAC, or Committee) to assess the County's land use and environmental review processes and to recommend improvements. The direction came in the wake of George Lucas' withdrawal of his mega-studio project on Grady Ranch after many years of stops and starts. The Board figured there must be a better way for would-be development applicants to cut through the red-tape of regulations, procedures, and neighborhood snarls (See MCL November-December 2012 *Newsletter*).

The Board identified four critical areas in the County's land use and regulatory programs that needed improvement: permit review, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Countywide Plan policies, and County fees related to the permitting process. The overriding objective was to improve "customer service" by reducing "red-tape" and making the permit process more efficient, cost effective, and "user-friendly."

Eleven individuals with varied experience in the permitting process and land use

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Status updates *from page 4*

issues, started meeting in October 2012 and met regularly over the next year. The committee is close to finalizing its "Priority Recommendations," supported by about four dozen specific actions.

Early in its meetings, the committee recognized that the full charge given them would be impossible to accomplish. Recommending improvements to CEQA or creating special incentives for projects that carry out key policies in the Countywide Plan would require analysis far beyond their available time. In addition, CEQA, as a state law, allows only limited discretion in how it is implemented locally. As a consequence, the Committee decided to focus on the permit review and building process, such as applications for home additions, remodels,

Both applicants and public are "customers" of the County.

new garages, repair, and other permits that occupy County staff time—and secondarily on related issues, such as clear communications and improvements to web-based resources. The Committee also decided that the term "customer" should include the general public—stakeholders and concerned citizens—as well as applicants for development permits. All of these interests are served by the County.

These decisions framed the ensuing discussions. The Committee identified opportunities to promote greater clarity and timeliness for all parties involved in review of development proposals—applicants, staff, interested public, and other stakeholders. Many of these opportunities will reinforce initiatives already in process by County staff. The Committee's results are reflected in eleven "Top Priorities" and a detailed list of Recommended Actions.

The Priorities, paraphrased in draft form at this writing, give a sense of the Committee's discussions over the past 18 months: 1) **Enhance** understanding of project application procedures and environmental review; 2) **Simplify** and organize regulations in a manner that is easily accessible to all parties; 3) **Support**

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MCL Business Member Profile

Bartlett Tree Experts

By Linda Novy

Mike Greene, Local Manager of Bartlett Tree Experts' Marin office, was pleased to share the reason they joined MCL in 2004: "We believe strongly in the conservation issues that MCL supports." Similarly, Bartlett's conservation programs—diagnostic plant health care, "green" administrative practices, a modern and hybrid fleet, and on-going innovations—all combine to improve plant health and the environment, and to conserve resources in the process.

Mike Greene of Bartlett Tree Experts displays his company's Green Business Certificate.

Mike stated, "Improved root development improves tree health," and to make that a reality, Bartlett's prescription fertilization of trees and shrubs is based on soil testing. They developed an Organic Materials Review Institute-listed, 100% organic fertilizer, and can blend this with prescription micronutrients as well. This strategy conserves resources and applies just what each specific plant species requires. This diagnostic strategy extends to other aspects of their Plant Health Care program by monitoring each plant's holistic needs. Cultural conditions are addressed, and specific treatment options like bio-controls, horticultural oil sprays, and organic materials are recommended to their customers. This responsible approach protects our air, water, and biological resources.

Bartlett is pioneering the use of bio-char, a material obtained from the thermo-chemical conversion of biomass in an oxygen-limited environment. Bio-char adds carbon to the soil, while boosting the functions of soil microorganisms. After opening up compacted soils with an air-spade, Bartlett mixes bio-char with organic compost to amend the soil. Bio-char can be thought of as a "hotel" for microorganisms in the soil. They can also add a finer grained bio-char to their liquid fertilization mixes.

Bartlett keeps a modern fleet on the road to minimize emissions. They were among the first to put their arborist representatives in hybrid vehicles. In their San Rafael office, they invested in new light fixtures that are energy efficient and heating and air conditioning equipment and settings meet conservation standards. It's obvious why Bartlett's was Green Certified in 2013 and why they are a Green Business Member of MCL.

And, lastly, Bartlett offers free wood chips! Call 415-472-4300 to get on their "chip list." Mike shared that mulching soil is an important drought strategy to keep the soil cool, add organic matter, and conserve moisture.

Water for Life: Three views of State water

"We have to learn how to do what we want with less."

That was how Peter Gleick, President of the Pacific Institute, concluded his remarks at Planning and Conservation League's Annual Environmental Symposium on February 1 at UC Davis School of Law. He added, "It appears that the state must prepare for a new, parched 'normal.'"

Against the backdrop of Governor Brown's emergency drought declaration, more than 200 people, including top thinkers and decision-makers on state water policy, gathered for the 2014 Symposium, entitled Water for Life, which focused on how to move California towards a more equitable and sustainable water future.

Visions for future water

Offering his "soft path" vision for water planning for California, Dr. Gleick pointed out that while we inherited the state's existing water system, that doesn't mean we can't redesign it to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We must begin by integrating groundwater management with surface water management; modify pricing and rate structures to promote rather than discourage conservation; recognize the importance of healthy ecosystems; massively expand conservation and efficiency with both short-term measures (like short showers) and permanent efficiency, i.e., doing what we want with less; expand recycling massively; and do a much better job of integrating all agencies that deal with water.

Tim Quinn, Executive Director of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), who represents water districts throughout the state, leaned toward a "harder path" vision—developing water supply and more storage, although he agreed on the need for better managing groundwater and promoting efficiency, conservation, and recycling. The 21st century needs to embrace "statewide water action" and not limit discussion to Delta tunnels, he said.

With an array of possible approaches to the California's water needs, Quinn said that we need to pursue "all of the above." In response, Gleick emphasized the need for priorities: "Comprehensive planning does not mean 'doing everything.' "

Water bond

It is likely that a revised water bond will appear on the November 2014 ballot. Senator Lois Wolk (SB 848) and Assembly Member Anthony Rendon (AB 1331) presented two similar but somewhat differing proposals, ranging from $6.5 billion (Rendon) to $6.825 billion (Wolk). Both would reject the earmarks that weighed down the $11.12 billion water bond proposed in 2009 and 2012. Both would fund safe drinking water quality; supply enhancement through conservation, efficiency and groundwater clean-up; storage; watershed and ecosystem protections; levees, and flood protection. They differ in strategies for storage; Wolk believes that storage capacity can be gained within the existing system, by removing trapped sediment behind old dams. Both proposals are neutral regarding the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) proposed twin tunnels.

Getting 2/3 vote will be challenging. Surveys of public attitudes toward a water bond reveal widespread lack of basic knowledge of where water comes from and differing regional preferences, particularly as to water storage. A recent comparison of bond proposals is at mavensnotebook.com.

BDCP and the twin tunnels

The final session compared differing approaches to meeting the co-equal goals of the 2009 Delta Reform Act, which calls for restoring the Bay-Delta ecosystem and providing reliable water supply to 25 million people. Paul Helliker, former MMWD General Manager and now Deputy Director of Department of Water Resources for Delta Projects, outlined the BDCP favored by the Brown administration. This 50-year plan would move the fresh water diversion point from the existing location at the south end of the Delta to the north end. Three intakes could divert up to 9,000 cubic feet per second of fresh water into two 150-foot deep, 30-mile long tunnels. The Plan, the subject of a 38,000-page document and EIR/EIS, also calls for restoring ecosystems on 100,000 to 145,000 acres of Delta farmland. The public comment period closes April 14, (e-mail to BDCP.comments@noaa.gov).

Henry Warren

Peter Gleick speaking at MCL's 2011 Annual Dinner.

Doug Obegi, attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, countered with an alternative "portfolio-based" approach that does not focus exclusively on the BDCP Delta facility or Delta habitat restoration. Instead, it proposes a diverse portfolio of regional projects and near-term investments, both in and outside the Delta, as well as a single tunnel to divert 3,000 cfs from approximately the same point as the BDCP proposal. This alternative is supported by a diverse group, including PCL and other environmental organizations, several business organizations, and six urban water agencies.

MCL has been a member and supporter of PCL since its inception in 1965. More than 30 years ago, MCL played a major role in defeat of the "Peripheral Canal" (Prop. 9, 1982). Now, MCL and many other groups across the state are closely following the debate on the BDCP project and alternatives. The MCL Board has not yet adopted a formal position.

MMWD's Mt. Tamalpais Watershed gets some "TLC"

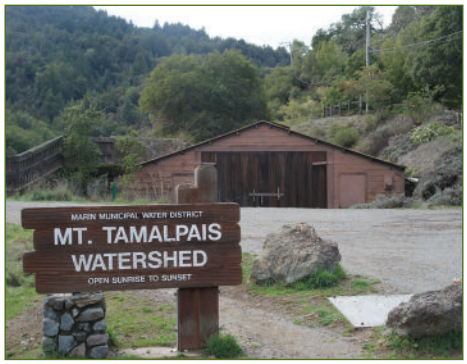
By Nona Dennis

Without much fanfare the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) Board on February 4, 2014, adopted a Memorandum of Understanding for the "Tamalpais Lands Collaborative" (TLC) that will enable the District, in partnership with National Park Service (NPS), California Department of Parks and Recreation, Marin County Parks, and supported by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, to ensure the long term care of the Mt.Tamalpais Watershed and its surrounding lands. The TLC provides a mechanism to engage the entire community in providing volunteer and financial resources towards the long-term stewardship of Marin's iconic mountain.

A "Friends-type" organization had long been a goal of the District Board. Larry Minikes, former President of the Tamalpais Conservation Club asked: "Hasn't this been going on for at least 15 years?" District Director Jack Gibson agreed. Jack was responsible for starting the Mt.Tamalpais Watershed Fund in 1996 as a means of attracting contributions and volunteers. Donations accumulated, and in 2010, the Board agreed to hire a consultant to draft a plan for a non-profit "Friends" organization.

Public response to the preliminary plan for such an organization was ambivalent, however. MCL was concerned that the District would be adding a new non-profit to the already crowded field of environmental non-profits in Marin County and found the plan overburdened with administrative personnel. Despite lukewarm public support, the Board decided to pursue its plan, and by June, 2012, a community leadership team was discussing branding, a name, and possible early projects.

At the same time, ongoing conversations between the District and staff at the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and NPS led to a possible alternative approach: if the plan encompassed all of Mt. Tamalpais,



it would bring in the other public land agencies—NPS, California State Parks, and Marin County Parks—whose lands abut the MMWD watershed. A collaborative under the "wing" of the already established non-profit Parks Conservancy could support programs and projects on all of the public lands of Mt.Tamalpais.

The involved agencies hosted a joint public workshop in June. 2013. Over 50 people, including agency staff and members of the community, considered three models: the collaborative (TLC) model; an alternative that focused only on MMWD watershed; and a third model, complementary to either approach. Participants strongly favored the TLC model.

The MMWD Watershed Committee directed staff to proceed with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the collaboration, with the goal of working together to restore natural and cultural resources on Mt. Tamalpais, and to develop philanthropic and volunteer resources.

Under the MOU, each partner will develop lists of projects and programs on their own lands as well as possible collaborative projects that cross boundaries. Out of these proposals, the partners will adopt a "5 Year List" of projects. Parks Conservancy, in consultation with partners, will then raise funds to support projects on the List. Projects within or affecting MMWD lands, such as invasive weed removal or habitat restoration, will require advance approval of the MMWD Board of Directors. The Parks Conservancy will assume fiduciary responsibility and report annually on accomplishments. The agreement term is 10 years, and any party may terminate its involvement without cause.

The TLC was officially launched at an event in Mill Valley on February 13, hosted by the Parks Conservancy and Peter Coyote, and featuring Gary Yost's "The Invisible Peak," a documentary about the mountain's hidden West Peak. As Mike Swezy, MMWD Watershed Manager, said, as he was offered congratulations on the successful launch: "Now the real work begins!"

Lake Lagunitas

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Annual dinner *from page 1*

Marcus returned to Los Angeles and worked for several years as a public interest lawyer and community organizer—focusing on air, water, toxics and land use matters. She was a founder of Heal the Bay, an organization that successfully pressured Los Angeles to reduce its dumping of sewage into Santa Monica Bay.

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley plucked her from leadership in the environmental movement to serve on the City's Board of Public Works, the panel that oversees city construction as well as the sewage system. During her time the city transitioned from facing multiple lawsuits to earning national awards for environmental excellence.

During the Clinton Administration, she was selected to be Regional Administrator of the U.S. EPA Region IX in San Francisco. She was known there for her work in bringing unlikely allies together for environmental progress and for making the agency more responsive to the diverse communities it serves. While at EPA, Ms. Marcus worked extensively in air quality, Bay-Delta water, tribal, and US-Mexico border issues. From 2001 she was Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Trust for Public Land, managing a staff of 450 in 40 offices across the U.S. dedicated to land conservation. In 2008 she became Western Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council. NRDC brings together the law, science and policy expertise of over 350 staff members to solve the world's pressing environmental and conservation challenges.

In 2012, Governor Brown appointed Ms. Marcus to the State Board, and as Chair, in April 2013. Among many other board appointments and positions, she was appointed to the Delta Stewardship Council 2010, and is an Obama Administration appointee to the Commission on Environmental Cooperation—Joint Public Advisory Committee.

Environmental Awards

MCL will also be presenting its annual Awards for Environmental Achievement at the dinner. The *John M. McPhail, Jr., Green Business Award* will be given to

MCL's Annual Dinner and Meeting
Friday, April 11, 5:30 p.m.
The Key Room, Hamilton
$75 per person
Pre-registration required

Nancy Scolari; **Mike Swezy** will receive the *Green Award for Environmental Leadership*; **Gallinas Watershed Council** will be awarded the *Ted Wellman Water Award;* and the *Peter Behr Award for Lifetime Achievement* will be given to **Jean Berensmeier**, long-time San Geronimo Valley resident and environmental advocate. Branson School student **Jolon Timms** will receive the *Award for Environmental Stewardship* and a *Special Award for Environmental Achievement* will be presented to **Kelly+Yamamoto Productions** for their fine documentary "Rebels with a Cause." The *Marin Conservation League Volunteer of the Year* will be announced at the dinner. MCL members who attend the dinner will also elect Directors and Officers for the upcoming term. (See election notice below.)

The event will be held at 5:30 pm, Friday, April 11, at the Key Room at the New Beginnings Center, a program of Homeward Bound, 1385 No. Hamilton Parkway in Southern Novato.

Tickets are $75 per person and pre-registration is required. Register online at marinconservationleague.org/events or call 415-485-6257. **This event has sold out the past several years, so register early—no tickets will be available at the door.**

Marin Conservation League

Annual Meeting & Election, April 11, 2014

The Key Room at Homeward Bound

1385 N. Hamilton Parkway, Novato, California

Proposed Slate of Officers and Directors for 2014—2015

The Marin Conservation League's Nominating Committee, chaired by Jana Haehl, has nominated the following persons for election as MCL Officers and Directors at the 2014 Annual Meeting and Election. **All MCL members who attend the meeting are eligible to vote.**

Nominated for Election as Officers for 2014-2015

President—Jon Elam, San Anselmo
First Vice President—Nona Dennis, Mill Valley
Second Vice President—Vicki Nichols, Sausalito
Secretary—Judy Teichman, Pt. Reyes Station
Treasurer—Ken Drexler, Fairfax

Nominated for election as Directors new to the MCL Board:

Term ending April 2017

Larry Minikes—San Rafael
Linda Novy—Fairfax
Kate Powers—San Rafael
Julia Violich—Kentfield

Nominated for re-election to the MCL Board:

Term ending April 2017

Jana Haehl—Corte Madera

The following Directors will continue to serve existing terms:

Term ending April 2015

Pamela Reaves—San Rafael
Susan Stompe—Novato
Jill Templeton—Mill Valley
Ann Thomas—Corte Madera

Term ending April 2016

Sally Gale—Petaluma
Randy Greenberg—Tiburon
Robert Johnston—Inverness
Larry Smith—Nicasio
Doug Wilson—Mill Valley

Tule elk *from page 2*

as authorized by former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar in November 2012. In addition to long-term management alternatives for the free-roaming elk, which could include population control methods or even transferring some or all of the free roaming animals to elk preserves elsewhere in California, the Ranch Plan will cover twenty-year leases, crop diversification, speed of individual permits, use of herbicides, operational flexibility, sustainability and organic certification, for which the ranches on the Seashore are well-known. As the Plan moves forward, the Seashore will continue to extend individual ranch permits with letters of authorization, she said.

Addressing short term actions, David Press said that PRNS staff began gathering data in 2009 to track the movements of the elk that had migrated onto ranches in the pastoral zone some six to eight miles distant. Staff augmented visual surveys by adding GPS collars to track several individuals. Since that time staff has collected some 11,000 data points, revealing seasonal and diurnal patterns. Research on the elk populations was also done by McCrea Andrew Cobb during the same general time frame, as cited above.

MCL urges the Seashore to continue taking steps to reduce elk-caused damage to the ranches.

Seashore staff also has taken a number of steps to deal with the problem of elk encroachment onto ranches in the short term and will continue these in 2014. They include experimental fencing, such as electrical fencing and/or increasing fence height; assisting ranchers with fence repairs; hazing animals to guide elk away from C Ranch to non-grazing areas; developing water features away from ranches, where animals will congregate; relocating some individuals back into Limantour Wilderness Area; rounding up problem animals; and working with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) elk experts and studying management of other elk preserves around the state. Press said that various population control methods have been tested and all options are "open"; none are simple, however.

National Park Service

Superintendent Cicely Muldoon

Ranchers Respond

Several members of the PRSRA expressed their concerns. In particular, they do not believe that beginning a new planning process is necessary. Despite a Department of the Interior Solicitor's opinion to the contrary, the ranchers think the existing 1998 Plan provides management tools that could be used now to deal with animals in the pastoral zone. Ranchers are also insistent on the need for immediate solutions. Not all ranchers can continue to support the growing costs of purchasing water and organic feed to maintain their herds, while growing numbers of elk compete for scarce water and forage. Ted McIsaac, President of the PRSRA put it succinctly: "We need positive results; we don't want the NPS to study (this problem) to death."

Next Steps

Other questions raised at the meeting concerned the role of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as outlined in MOUs with the Seashore in 1969 and 1998. The CDFW are involved in elk-cattle interactions throughout the state and are responsible for management of wildlife, including elk, in the State. The applicability of the MOU(s) to the elk on the Seashore at this time is currently under discussion. Assembly Member Levine has queried CDFW to determine the status of the 1969 and 1998 MOUs.

Superintendant Muldoon concluded her remarks by restating that the Plan for 20-year permits will provide the essential framework for long-term solutions for the elk. The Seashore expects to continue ongoing collaboration with ranchers during the planning process as well as actions aimed at reducing damage to ranches. She reiterated that the NPS is committed to continuing historic ranching and dairy farming in the pastoral zone of the Seashore, as authorized in the Seashore's enabling legislation. Representatives for Congressman Jared Huffman, Assemblymember Marc Levine, and Supervisor Steve Kinsey agreed that they are following the issues closely, and meeting with both ranchers and Seashore staff.

MCL will continue to study the issues, contribute scoping comments on the EA and Ranch Plan, and take an active part in the Seashore's planning process. At the same time, MCL believes that the state-wide drought has added a note of urgency to the need for short-term solutions and urges the Seashore to continue taking whatever steps are possible to reduce elk-caused damage to the ranches.

MAKE WAY FOR NEWTS!

Dru Parker

Recent rains have brought out Marin's slow-moving, water-loving amphibians, like this newt meandering the Big Rock Ridge trail. Keep your eyes out for these little guys and move them out of the path of boots, hooves and tires!

State's Water Boards at work in Marin

by Nona Dennis

Water—or lack thereof—is on everyone's mind in California. Recent rains lifted spirits but did little to relieve the drought. Much attention is being paid to the possible shortfall in water supplies for municipal and agricultural uses, but what about the needs of ecosystems? How much water, and what quality of water, is necessary to maintain clean streams and sustain wildlife habitats and aquatic life and other beneficial uses of our waters?

These functions are the province of the **State Water Resources Control Board**, a state agency that has primary responsibility for allocating water rights and protecting and maintaining the quality of the state's waters. In Marin that means protection of some 3,000 miles of streams, several thousand acres of wetlands, San Francisco (and San Pablo) Bay, and Tomales Bay. For most people, the State and Regional Water Boards "fly under the radar" – that is, unless you are a wastewater treatment operator, a rancher managing dairy waste or a herd of grazing livestock, a homeowner wishing to shore up an eroding bank, or a public works director trying to fulfill strict regulations for managing stormwater entering creeks. For all of these activities in Marin, the key regulating agency is the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Dru Parker

A badly damaged 5.4-mile section of Sir Francis Drake Blvd . was recently repaved after vigorous oversight by the Regional Water Board to ensure that surface runoff will not enter adjacent Lagunitas Creek.

Water Boards Background

The California Legislature established the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) in 1949 to address water quality to meet the needs of beneficial uses of surface and groundwater throughout the state. Under provisions of the federal Clean Water Act (1972), the State Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (1969,) and the California Water Code, the State and Regional Boards form a unique a relationship—coordination of policy at the state-level, and familiarity with local needs and conditions at a regional level. As a unit of government, they are within the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA). Last year, Governor Brown appointed Felicia Marcus, who will speak at MCL's Annual dinner on April 11, to chair the State Board.

The State Board administers water rights and provides policy guidance to the nine Regional Water Boards. Each Regional Board, develops and periodically updates a "Basin Plan" for its geographic region, which designates beneficial uses to be protected (municipal and agricultural water supply, groundwater recharge, estuarine and marine habitat, fish and wildlife, rare and endangered species, contact and non-contact water recreation, shellfish harvesting, and areas of biological significance). The Plan sets the water quality objectives necessary to support these beneficial uses and details plans to control sources of pollutants to meet the objectives. Pollutants come from both point sources, such as discharges from wastewater treatment facilities and industries, or non-point sources, such as urban stormwater and agricultural runoff.

The Basin Plan sets water quality objectives, known as "total maximum daily loads" (TMDLs), that is, the maximum amount of a pollutant that can remain in the water column without adverse effect on aquatic organisms or any other beneficial use of the water. For example, Tomales Bay supports both water contact (swimming) and non-contact (boating) recreation, as well as shellfish harvesting. It also receives runoff from the largest watershed in Marin County, where pollutants from both human and animal sources in the watershed include nutrients and pathogens such as fecal coliform from failing septic systems or animal waste, and sediments from stream bank erosion. TMDLs have been established for those pollutants in the Tomales Bay watershed. As a consequence Marin's dairies and livestock producers are highly regulated by the Regional Board to control these pollutants at their source.

The story of the Regional Water Board's involvement in Marin is extensive and complicated, but one example drawn from agricultural Marin illustrates what the Board does to protect and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of Marin's water resources.

COW Program in West Marin

In the agricultural community of West Marin, the Regional Water Board is both regulator and provider of funding assistance. Working with the Water Board and many other local, state, and federal partners and agricultural producers, since the 1960s the Marin Resource Conservation

Continued on page 11

Water Board *from page 10*

District (MRCD) has coordinated hundreds of projects on Marin County ranches to improve water quality. In recent years, the Marin RCD brought this effort into one program entitled the Conserving Our Watersheds (COW) Program.

Success comes from rancher cooperation and partnering with agencies.

The goal of the COW program is to support agriculture and the environment by implementing voluntary improvements on agricultural lands in West Marin's watersheds. The Program was designed to help ranchers comply with Water Board and other regulations by providing technical and financial assistance to ranchers who want to complete restoration projects on their land. These projects typically consist of commonly used best management practices (BMPs), such as critical area plantings, fish passage, grade stabilization structures, water developments, streambank protection, stream habitat improvement, and sediment control basins. A central objective is to reduce fine sediment delivery to streams, which can degrade downstream spawning habitat. Some completed projects aimed at restoring habitat for fish also report increases in bird populations.

The COW Program pulls together various funding sources but primarily from the Regional Water Board. The program is successful due to rancher cooperation and to partnering with other local agencies and organizations for funds. To date, the COW Program has secured three separate grants from the Regional Water Board, totaling over $2,045,000. With matching funds of over $355,000, 23 landowners will have implemented a total of 105 BMPs. Several are in process at this time.

As an example, one landowner's project included three BMPs: repairing a streambank, lining a waterway, and planting a critical area. The project was funded by the Regional Water Board and the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service. It involved repairing 110 linear feet of streambank and planting 592 trees and shrubs. The photos below show the project site before and after implementation.

The Regional Board is also a major player in any application for a permit to conduct work in or near streams in Marin, especially one that supports endangered fish. The recently repaved Sir Francis Drake Boulevard through Samuel P. Taylor, for example, is now completed, but only after extended negotiations between the County and the Regional Board to ensure that new retaining walls would not impact the stream (coho salmon habitat) and that a rigorous mitigation plan would prevent surface runoff from the road from directly entering Lagunitas Creek.

This is only a snapshot of the Water Boards' positive influence on the environment of Marin and elsewhere throughout the Bay Area.

Status updates *from page 5*

CDA's current efforts to expand online permitting, processing, and tracking, one-stop permitting, and "over-the-counter" permitting to improve service; 4) **Develop** a voluntary Ombudsman program to mediate differences between CDA staff, applicant, and others involved in the project review process; 5) **Designate** a "permit concierge" (single point of contact) to the CDA's front counter; 6) **Assign** a "multi-disciplinary" reviewer at the front counter to reduce need to route permits to all departments and divisions; 7) **Expand** the capacity of the agency's plan check function by adding an additional building plan checker; 8) **Update** the County's Environmental Impact Review guidelines to reflect recent changes in State law and CEQA Guidelines; 9) **Provide** regular, timely training to Design Review Boards to enable consistency and engagement with local communities; 10) **Improve** the CDA's internal and external communication strategies; and 11) **Adjust** project review and permit fees to reflect actual staff time.

These priorities, together with detailed action items, will give the Supervisors guidance as they work toward improving a process that currently occupies too much staff time and is a source of frustration for applicants and public alike. Committee members are happy with their time spent, even if the outcome leaves many issues still to be resolved. *—Nona Dennis*

Eroded streambank before repair

The completed restoration project

photos courtesy Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the MCL office and are open to the public.

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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

North Marin Unit: Varies, check website

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

MCL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All contributions and memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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