

SF Environment Director to speak at Annual Dinner

Marin Conservation League is honored to announce that Debbie Raphael, Director of the [Dept. of Environment for the City of San Francisco](#), will join MCL at its Annual Dinner on April 24 as keynote speaker. Sometimes called the "Architect of San Francisco's Precautionary Principle," Ms. Raphael has over 20 years of experience in environmental policy and government administration.

Ms. Raphael assumed her current position in San Francisco after serving as Director of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Appointed to that position by Governor Jerry Brown in 2011, Raphael was responsible during her tenure for the protection of human health and the environment from the impacts of toxic chemicals and hazardous

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Debbie Raphael

Marin General Hospital

Expansion to begin in fall



The Marin General Hospital Expansion project includes a five-story replacement hospital. The existing wings shown here will be renovated.

By Ann Thomas

One of the largest construction projects Marin County has seen in recent years is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2015 and will continue for at least five years. The [Marin Healthcare District](#) is embarking on a phased reconstruction of Marin General Hospital (MGH) that eventually will approximately double the size of the built campus, add more than 400 full-time employees to the campus, including some staff currently working off-site, and require road changes, including addition of at least one traffic signal at an entry to the hospital. Voters gave a "green light" to the project in 2013 when they approved Measure F general obligation bonds to cover a portion of the cost to redevelop the hospital campus.

The plan's major elements include:

- A five-story, dual pavilion, 300,000 square foot replacement hospital on the south end of the campus closest to South Eliseo Drive.

- Two parking garages: a six level, 412 space structure on the northeast corner where the Marin Community Clinic portable was located, and a five level, 507 space structure, tentatively to be built later, near Bon Air Road.
- A five-story 100,000 square foot outpatient services building that would be built by private investors, possibly a medical group.
- Renovation and reuse of the existing hospital wings.

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A Message from the President



As I

write my message for this newsletter, it gives me a time to pause and think about the issues of the day and what MCL and its

members would want the organization's Board to work on and think about. It seems that just a short time ago—early December—the annual United Nations gathering on Climate took place in Lima, Peru. I was not present, but have been a delegate at several United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change gatherings. I see how challenging it is to get consensus on something as big as a Climate Treaty. But I also have seen that while the

world's leaders and powers are meeting in the global arena, there remains real work for all of us on the home front.

MCL has an 81-year history of doing just that: "working on the home front" — preserving Marin's open spaces and public lands, fighting for conservation policies that help to limit our impacts on the environment, and working to reduce our carbon footprint. We have been a strong endorser of Marin Clean Energy and note that nearly 80 percent of all Marin residents and businesses are members of MCE.

The work of [MCL committees](#) remains the backbone of the organization, tracking issues of the day such as agriculture policy and development in West Marin and the Coastal Zone. Our Climate Action group has taken on energy efficiency as a priority, and our Water and Watersheds Committee

continues to feature speakers on a range of issues, including water use and quality, water conservation, flood management, and the drought. Our Land Use and Parks and Open Space Committees bring a larger focus to issues that preserve and protect Marin's greatest natural assets.

Thus while we watch with frustration as the world struggles with the complex facets of climate policy and efforts at the national level bog down in politics, the members of MCL carry out work at every meeting as they sort through local issues and look to the future. This is why your support of MCL is so important. We are grateful to have you as a part of MCL's mission!

Editorial

Marin's new Road and Trail Management Plan needs your attention!

Many of us are neighbors of Marin County's open space preserves, or we visit our favorite open spaces to walk our dogs, hike, jog, ride a horse, or ride a mountain bike. We enjoy spring wildflowers, watch birds, exercise, or simply catch a few moments to relax at the end of the day. It's easy to take these preserves for granted!

Much has been written in this Newsletter about the County's new [Road and Trail Management Plan \(RTMP\)](#) for

the County's 34 Preserves. Now, after four years of workshops, public hearings, and political jockeying, the Plan is at a critical juncture in which a process defined on paper and maps will be put into place on the ground. In this very public arena, each of us will have the opportunity to weigh in on how roads and trails will be designated as parts of a "system," and how they will be repaired, improved, developed, changed in use, decommissioned, or left as they are

over time. The RTMP provides the policies, standards, and tools, but the implementation process—Region by Region, trail by trail—will go on for many years, and the outcome is not defined.

In many respects it is a good plan, the product of huge staff time and expertise. If implemented properly, it will protect habitats, streams, wetlands, and spotted owls and other sensitive species

that inhabit lands that have been set aside at great expense and human effort for future generations to enjoy. But the RTMP is a process, not a road map. It does not lay out a clear vision of what our preserves will look like in coming years. In fact, it does not yet even lay out a current "road and trail system." That system will evolve over time as old road and trail facilities are improved, new ones take shape, and anticipated use patterns change.

For that reason, it is essential that all people who use the preserves on a regular basis, the majority of whom are on foot, take an active role in the planning process to ensure that natural resources are protected and that the enjoyment and safety of hiking, walking dogs, or jogging, horseback riding and bike riding are not compromised. Unlike people on foot, who are not politically organized, the mountain biking community is supported by paid staff who have energized bikers to lobby for increased access to narrow ("single-track") trails that currently are not open to them.

Marin's open space preserves are enjoyed by a variety of users every day.



Dru Parker

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Status Updates

SMART construction in Marin wetlands

As the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART) continues track replacement through Central Marin, concerns over protection of Gallinas Creek and marsh have been heightened as local observers monitor the work of heavy equipment along the project alignment. After getting into hot water in late 2012, when SMART began to tear up track along Gallinas Creek without a proper permit, the District sought and received a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2013 to upgrade about 18 miles of old track along with bridges, grade crossings and culverts from San Rafael to Petaluma. Work would take an estimated three years, according to the permit.

areas of loss, but mitigation measures for ongoing construction, once adopted, are often not diligently monitored. SMART construction through the wetlands is regulated by the Army Corps, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, US Fish and Wildlife, and the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

As track work advanced, neighbors observing the construction process raised concerns to the SMART Board and to the regulatory agencies about falling silt barriers, sediment drift during rains, chemically treated timber ties added at crossings (not in the permit), and heavy and noisy work along areas known as habitat for the federally protected Ridgway's Rail (formerly California Clapper Rail), Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse and Black Rail. This habitat area is noticeably lacking any



Debris and pollutants from SMART construction in Gallinas Creek, January 2015.

Kate Powers

Although the EIR did discuss wetlands, concluding that the project would result in the loss of 1.9 acres of wetlands and would temporarily affect 5.9 acres during construction, SMART officials did not realize that pulling out track would create an impact requiring permit. Calls to regulatory agencies and the Board of Supervisors were required to have this work stopped until proper measures for mitigating the impact was put in place. Mitigation had been established in the EIR process for the

buffer between construction work and the marsh. Construction of the track adjacent to Gallinas Creek marsh area has been halted as required during the nesting and breeding season for the rails. Water quality concerns continue to be monitored by local observers as creosote ties continue to be laid in areas that wash directly into the creek and marsh.

—*Kate Powers*

Gross Field Runway

As previously reported in this [Newsletter](#), the Gross Field runway extension was scheduled for a county hearing in February. But in January the county received a letter from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) calling for a new study to re-examine the assumptions made by the county over the last ten years of runway extension studies. The new study will take from twelve to eighteen months to complete. This is welcome news for MCL and those others who questioned the project's Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement for not looking at alternative runway extension lengths or potential changes in fleet composition.

—*Susan Stompe*

A new era for State Parks?

A collective sense of optimism greeted the Parks Forward Commission's (PFC) final report at a large gathering in the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento on February 6. The occasion was more than an opportunity for the commissioners to congratulate themselves on the results of their 18-month endeavor. Led by John Laird, Secretary of Natural Resources, a parade of speakers testified that the report promised a new era of organizational transformation, rededication to non-profit and other partnerships, expansion of park access to a more diverse public, and fiscal sustainability for the 279-park system. Everyone agreed that implementation of the recommendations should begin as soon as possible.

Acting State Parks Director Lisa Magnat expressed gratitude not only to the Commission for its work, but also for the support of the Governor and Administration. Recent praise from Marin Assemblymember Mark Levine suggests that the legislature, too, is poised to support the report's recommendations. Mr. Laird, stressed, however, that the Parks Department will need to demonstrate to

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Status Updates

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the public, legislature and media that change is indeed occurring, and then make sure it sticks!

The main tasks in the PFC report, which looks forward to 2025, are: making protection of system's **natural and cultural resources** a priority; establishing a **stable funding structure**; **expanding park access** for all Californians; opening pathways to leadership for the **most qualified employees**, not restricted to peace officers (a key recommendation of MCL); creating a statewide **strategic nonprofit partner** similar to Golden Gate Parks Conservancy or Yosemite Conservancy; and establishing a **Transformation Team** of experienced personnel to begin transforming the Department's organizational structure and outdated technology and accounting systems.

MCL has monitored the Parks Forward process diligently since mid-2013

The 15-member Transformation Team has committed to a two-year implementation action plan contained in the report and will report progress to Mr. Laird. Working together with the Parks Department, the Team has already engaged in several projects that were presented at the February meeting. One is a contest undertaken by a class at Cal Poly Pomona School of Environmental Design to design and produce prototypes of small cabins that can be clustered in some parks to make camping more available for people who don't have or can't afford camping equipment. Another is applying Google Street View to trails in 14 state parks. And another shows how social media and a new app can attract tech savvy young people to locate parks nearby and browse park features. Many people use social media in the parks to take and post photos, write trail blogs, and or initiate meet-ups with their friends. As the presenter said: "The party is there; we just have to find out how to join it, encourage exploration, and assist it!"



©parkmodels.com

The Wedge Cabin, designed by architecture students from Cal Poly Pomona, is among the new cabin designs that could eventually be integrated into California State Parks.

Cabins serve to introduce camping to those without access to pricey and storage-intensive camping gear.

With the future of the seven State Park units in Marin at stake, MCL has monitored the Parks Forward process diligently since mid-2013, testifying at public workshops and submitting critical comments on earlier drafts of the Plan. Nona Dennis and Susan Stompe, of the MCL Board, and MCL member Arlin Weinberger attended the February 6 meeting. Also present was Danita Rodriguez, District Superintendent for the Bay Area District, which includes Marin District, who is a member of the Transformation Team. She said that among other tasks, the Team will hold public meetings throughout the state to ensure public input on the transformation. The full Parks Forward Commission will meet one more time later this year to hear a progress report from the Transformation Team.

The PFC report can be seen at parksforward.com or the [MCL website](http://mcl.org).

The Transformation Team and its action plan, "*TRANSFORMING California State Parks by Implementing Positive Change*," can also be found at parksforward.com.

—Susan Stompe and Nona Dennis

MCL reviews Marin's proposed Local Coastal Program

The January meeting of MCL's Agricultural Land Use Committee was unusual. On a screen in MCL's conference room was Local Coastal Program (LCP) Planning Supervisor Kevin Kahn speaking from the California

Coastal Commission's (CCC) North Central Coast District office in Santa Cruz, along with the District Planning Manager, veteran CCC staffer Nancy Cave, connected by phone from her San Francisco office. Present in the room and engaged in the dialogue were representatives of Marin's agricultural community—ranchers, Farm Bureau, U. C. Cooperative Extension, Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), and Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture; West Marin non-profits, including East (Tomales Bay) Shore Planning Group, Environmental Action Committee, and Save Our Seashore; County staff planning manager Jack Liebster, who has steered Marin County's Local Coastal Program update process since 2008; Liza Crosse, representing Supervisor Steve Kinsey; and nine MCL Board members.

The late January workshop was the third in a series organized by MCL's Agricultural Land Use Committee to bring the environmental and agricultural communities together with Coastal Commission and County staffers to exchange information and ideas in order to better understand and collaboratively respond to CCC staff's draft revisions to the proposed Marin Update to the LCP. The LCP consists of two parts: a Land Use Plan [LUP] that establishes a policy framework for the coastal zone, and an Implementation Plan [IP] that translates the policies into Marin County Development Code zoning limits and standards. The objective is a complete and certifiable LCP that fulfills

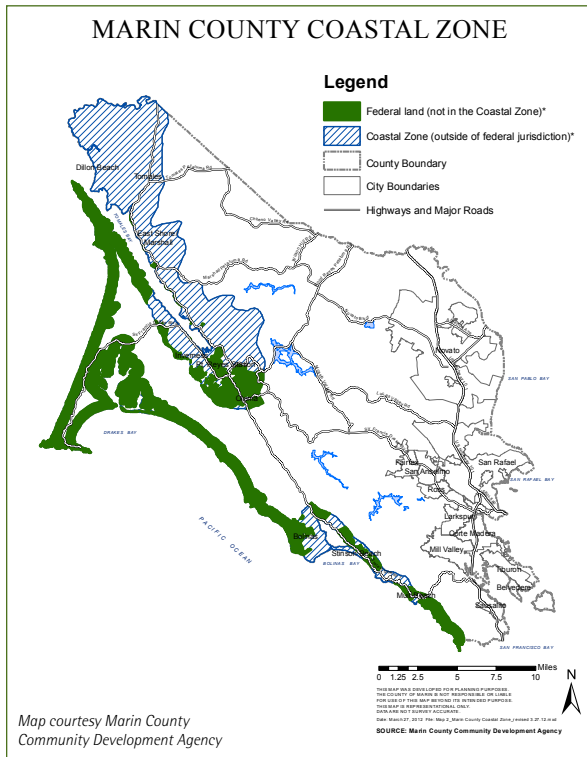
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Status Updates

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the California Coastal Act in Marin County. Until the Coastal Commission certifies the County's updated LCP, the County's coastal zone will continue to be governed by the County's original LCP certified in 1981.

Few local planning processes are as complex, drawn-out and costly in planning



staff time as assembling an LCP. Roughly one-quarter of Marin County's 520 square miles—from the Marin-Sonoma County border to Stinson Beach and including the communities of Dillon Beach, Tomales, Marshall, Pt. Reyes Station, and Bolinas—lies within the coastal zone and is therefore subject to policies in the Coastal Act that are designed to protect sensitive coastal resources, agriculture, and public access to the Coast. (Excluding federal parklands, which occupy about 40 percent of the coastal zone, the LCP covers slightly less than 15 percent of the entire county.) Marin County's coastal zone abounds in all three of these qualities, and giving them equal protection in all locations can be a challenge. Notably, two-thirds of Marin's coastal zone is zoned as Coastal

Agricultural Production (C-APZ). Thus, LCP policies which focus on agricultural protection, while allowing other compatible land uses on C-APZ land and meeting natural resource protection standards, are of paramount concern in ensuring that any development within Marin's coastal zone is compliant with the Coastal Act.

Marin County began the process of updating its LCP in 2008. Two years ago, MCL suggested optimistically that the updated LCP was headed for the "final stretch" (MCL [Newsletter January-February 2013](#)). After extensive Planning Commission workshops and hearings, the Marin Board of Supervisors adopted an updated LCP in mid-2013 and submitted it to the CCC staff for their review. Many months later, at a May 2014 meeting, the Coastal Commission certified a version of the land use plan that had been amended considerably by staff from the County's original submission. It remained for the CCC staff to review and amend the implementation plan for consistency with the land use plan.

CCC staff's proposed revisions to the IP raised several substantive questions regarding agriculture that have been the focus of workshops hosted by MCL's Agricultural Land Use Committee during the past three months. Participants are working toward a better understanding of issues and consensus on concerns that have often divided them.

Among those issues: how to provide maximum protection to agriculturally productive land as well as to sensitive habitat resources and limit overall development; how, at the same time, to enable more than one generation to live on and operate a ranch; how to allow ranchers sufficient flexibility to diversify agricultural production from year-to-year in response to changing markets and climate conditions—such as converting grazing rangeland

Save the Date!
Friday, May 15
Senator Mike McGuire

MCL's May Business-Environment Breakfast will feature our new State Senator, Mike McGuire. Tickets go on sale in late March. Watch your inbox or the MCL website for details.

to cultivation of row crops—without major change to natural land forms or substantial increase in irrigation demand; how to cluster structures on the land to minimize both loss of productive land and visual intrusion; how to enable processing of agricultural products on ranches—for example cheeses—and retail sale of those products on site without excessive commercialization along roadways; and how to allow ranchers to supplement their agricultural incomes—"add value"—by hosting farm stays or Bed & Breakfast accommodations, or educational tours, again, without losing productive land, adding to tourist traffic, or compromising aesthetic qualities of the area.

All of these uses are generally allowed in the coastal zone, subject, however, to strict zoning limits and standards. The degree of regulation lies at the heart of most debate. All parties agree on the need to support the agricultural economy of Marin. The productive and cultural landscape of agriculture has created much of Marin's character, and long-term viability requires that ranchers be able to sustain their operations. Other programs, such as A-60 agricultural zoning, MALT easements, and Williamson Act contracts, work together to ward off the hobby farms and rural estates that threaten much of California's coast. The LCP provides an important framework for this network of protections. It is in the fine points of the LCP where consensus is slowly being achieved in the governance of Marin's coastal zone.

—Nona Dennis, with Sally Gale, Judy Teichman, and Jana Haehl

Events

Saturday, March 28th, 9:30 AM–12:30 PM

Walk into (Conservation) History: Rush Creek

MCL will lead its 17th Walk into (Conservation) History on Saturday, March 28, at one of the best birding locations in the North Bay—Rush Creek Open Space Preserve. This 522-acre preserve near Novato includes a huge expanse of restored tidal wetlands as well as mixed broadleaf forest on Pinheiro Ridge, home to many wildlife species and one of the few stands of blue oaks in Marin County.



Join us and discover how the land and wetlands were saved from development beginning in the late 1970s and later acquired by a volunteer effort spearheaded by Marin Audubon Society.

The three-mile walk is mostly level and offers expansive views. As always, dress in layers, wear hiking shoes, and bring your water, snacks, binoculars and camera.

Directions: From Hwy 101 in Novato, take Atherton Ave. east exit and make immediate left on Binford Road (frontage road.) The trailhead is on the right. Ample parking available on-street or in the CalTrans commuter lot.

This Walk is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to 415-485-6257 or ONLINE at marinconservationleague.org/events.

Family-friendly, horses allowed, dogs on-leash only.

Annual Dinner *from page 1*

waste and led a department of over 1,000 employees in 9 offices with a \$200 million annual budget. She led the successful programmatic and financial transformation of DTSC and revived California's efforts to protect consumers from toxic chemicals in everyday products through the Safer Consumer Products initiative.

Ms. Raphael previously worked for 12 years in the San Francisco Department of Environment as the Program Director for Toxics Reduction and Green Building. In her new capacity as Director of the Department, she will lead San Francisco's policy and programs for climate change, energy, and environmental justice, among others. She will work with the City's diverse residents and businesses in developing practical environmental programs that protect and enhance their homes and businesses, and promote social equity and protect human health in the urban environment. Mayor Lee said, on her appointment: "[She] is a proven leader who shares my commitment to extend San Francisco's environmental leadership

*MCL's Annual Dinner and Meeting
Friday, April 24, 5:30 p.m.
The Key Room, Hamilton
\$75 per person
Pre-registration required*

to include our diverse communities and build on our innovation economy. Her extensive knowledge and her ability to forge meaningful partnerships will help our communities adopt innovative sustainable practices so that San Francisco remains the Greenest City in North America."

Ms. Raphael received a Bachelor's degree in Biology/Plant Ecology from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master's degree in Physiological Plant Ecology from the University of California at Los Angeles. She lives in San Rafael.

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 **Lafranchi Ranch; Marin Open Space Trust (MOST)** will receive the Green Award

for Environmental Leadership; **Prunuske Chatham, Inc.** will be awarded the Ted Wellman Water Award; and the Peter Behr Award for Lifetime Achievement will be given to **former U.S. Representative George Miller**, who retired this year after forty years of representing his East Bay constituents and leading Congress on California water issues and national environmental policy. 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 on [page 12](#).)

The event will be held at 5:30 p.m., Friday, April 24, at the Key Room at Homeward Bound, 1385 North Hamilton Parkway in Southern Novato.

Tickets are \$75 per person and pre-registration is required. Tickets will go on sale in mid-March. This event has sold out the past several years, so register early—it is unlikely that tickets will be available at the door.

High tides push planning for sea level rise

by Nona Dennis

The early December rains were a welcome sight, but when the storm's runoff joined forces with king tides, the result was a "perfect storm" – traffic on 101 traffic and most arterials came to a complete standstill. King tides are over until later this year, but the question remains: What will the 101 corridor be like several decades from now as sea level continues its expected rise?

Until recently, county efforts were centered on **mitigation**, that is, on measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). In 2006, the County set a GHG reduction target of 15 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 for activities in the unincorporated county and for its own municipal operations. The County's updated **Draft Climate Action Plan** (Draft CAP), released for public review last fall, showed that the County had met its goal for unincorporated areas in 2012 – eight years ahead of schedule, and that the goal for municipal operations was "on target" for 2020. The rest of the county is also working to meet reduction targets through their CAPs, in part through collaboration in the Marin Energy & Climate Partnership (MCEP), formed in 2007. Mitigation programs continue aggressively, but attention has shifted to planning for climate change, in particular sea level rise.

Shifting to Adaptation

The County's updated Draft CAP's new section on **Adaptation** recommends that an "adaptation action plan" be launched by the county to assess vulnerabilities and outline strategies to prepare Marin for sea level rise. As a step in that direction, the Board of Supervisors late last year authorized \$250,000 to conduct a countywide **Climate Vulnerability Assessment**. The County is seeking an additional \$250,000 from the State Coastal Conservancy to augment that funding.

The County has already made significant

strides toward planning for adaptation. Armed with maps showing sea levels at mid-century and 2100, the County initiated the 18-month **Southern Marin Pilot Program** in 2013 under the leadership of Supervisor Kate Sears to engage citizens in understanding the vulnerabilities of their own communities to sea level rise along the Richardson Bay shoreline (MCL [Newsletter January-February 2014](#)). That study culminated in a Saturday workshop last November in which almost 100 community members selected among a variety of "hard" solutions (e.g., levees, flood gates) and "soft" solutions (e.g., horizontal wetlands, managed retreat) to strategically "protect" uplands from rising bay waters. Supervisor Sears plans to take film of the workshop "on the road" as a model for other communities.

At the local level, the San Rafael Community Development Agency prepared a "White Paper on Sea Level Rise," which inventoried public and private levees, assessed vulnerability, and recommended adaptation strategies. The white paper was released in January 2014, and is being integrated into a comprehensive hazard response strategy.

The Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilpersons recently established a subcommittee focusing on the eight vulnerable communities that share the Bay shoreline along with the County. Adaption is also on the agendas of Marin's City and Town Managers, Planning Directors, and Public Works Engineers.

The Pacific coastline of Marin County will experience not only rising sea level but also more intense storms, tidal extremes, and shoreline erosion. Funded by a \$250,000 grant, the two-year **"Collaboration: Sea-level Marin Adaptation Response Team (C-SMART)"** project is bringing local communities like Muir Beach, Stinson Beach, Pt. Reyes Station, Marshall, and the National Park Service together in public meetings to examine the potential exposure of people, natural resources, and the built environment to the likely effects of sea level rise and consider adaptive strategies.

Coordination Needed

County Planning Manager Jack Liebster compares the coalescing of adaptation planning efforts to the forming of a crystal: as molecules begin growing on the surface of the crystal, it keeps on getting bigger until it reaches equilibrium. That is where adaptation planning is heading. Given



Flooding at Shoreline Highway at Manzanita during a King Tide.

©secretivemarshbird/Flickr-CA King Tides Initiative

varied conditions and the independence of local politics, however, who will lead the towns, cities, special districts, and unincorporated county in a coordinated plan? This remains elusive.

MCL's Invasive Species Subcommittee goes local

In recent months, this *Newsletter* has featured a number of articles on the invasion of noxious weeds on our public lands, watersheds, and rangelands, and the effectiveness (or not) of methods to control them. This is not a new phenomenon in Marin! Forty years ago, MCL lamented the foothold broom had taken on the slopes of Mt. Tam. Now that foothold has been compounded many times over, measured in football fields. Fighting invasive plants on public lands is hugely expensive and ongoing—a major item in every land manager's annual budget.

If you are interested in the abatement of invasive weeds, contact chair Paul Minault at 415-485-6257.

Less attention has been paid to the spread of invasives originating in our own backyards. Species such as French and Scotch broom find their way into gardens and parklands, often due to inadvertent introduction of plant species (typically in bloom) that, surprisingly, are still found on some nursery shelves, in spite of widespread information on their bad habits. That problem is the current focus of MCL's **Invasive Species Subcommittee**, formed last fall as a subcommittee of MCL's

Parks and Open Space Committee.

Working in cooperation with members of California Native Plant Society (CNPS), the group is examining local general plans, policies, and ordinances to determine how effectively Marin's cities and towns are addressing the pernicious spread of invasives within their boundaries. Individual committee members have assigned themselves one or more of the eleven jurisdictions to determine whether invasive plant policies exist; if so, whether they have been programmed for action; and whether there is the political will and budget to support action. The group is also identifying other non-profits with a similar interest in abating invasive weeds and restoring native flora, and looking for their support in taking action to push every city and special district to develop an effective weed management program on both public and private lands, with funding, staff, and results. The committee members are also urging local towns and cities to allocate some of their Measure A "Parks, Open Space and Farmlands" funds to weed management.



Ornamental jubata ("pampas") grass on Point San Pedro Road (top) and invading nearby wetlands (bottom).



Dru Parker

Although far from complete, the initial survey has been discouraging: many in local government simply don't recognize invaders in their own communities, such as the yellow oxalis (aka sourgrass, or Bermuda buttercup). Although pretty during spring bloom, once established this plant will spread widely by tiny underground bulblets. At the other end of the spectrum, a clump of jubata grass (commonly known as pampas grass) can disperse thousands of seeds over many miles on a windy day. Few people realize that the initial invasion can begin in their own backyards or a vacant lot. Among their other ambitious goals, the Subcommittee is hoping to root out the problem locally.

The Subcommittee is seeking additional members, since it has a lot of ground to cover. If you are interested in this issue, contact the subcommittee chair, Paul Minault, at mcl@marinconservationleague.org or call MCL at 415-485-6257. The group meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 3:00 p.m. at the MCL office.



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Oxalis (O. pes-caprae) (top) is a pretty but invasive flower that is difficult to eradicate and is now wide-spread in Marin (right, at Rush Creek OSP).



Dru Parker

Hospital *from page 1*

- A Nursing Unit Infill Project in the new replacement hospital.
- Relocation, resurfacing, and landscaping of surface parking.

In addition to placing a traffic signal at the main entry from Bon Air Road, the Healthcare District has suggested a second traffic signal at an access point to be determined and relocating the bus stop from the hospital campus to Bon Air Road.

Parking garage is first phase

The County's jurisdiction over the campus reconstruction is limited to design review of the parking lot and garages, the non-acute care structures, and the exterior of the acute care hospital. The State has authority over acute care hospital interiors. The County does, however, have authority over Bon Air Road and changes proposed for the road are among project elements that will most affect the general public.

The first project phase includes the hillside garage and redesigned surface parking, which are necessary before major construction can begin. The plans also include installing a new traffic signal at the northern entrance to the site and removing 78 protected trees. The garage will have a footprint of more than a half-acre and maximum height of 69 feet above existing grade. A retaining wall, up to 40 feet high, will secure the excavated hillside to the rear of the garage. The Planning Commission approved the plans with design modifications on February 8. However, they expressed particular concern over the amount of excavation for the garage, the number of trees to be removed, and the massive retaining wall next to the parking garage. The retaining wall will be painted to look like natural rock and vines will be planted at the bottom and higher elevations of the wall.

Project background

MGH opened in 1952 as a community-based, not-for-profit hospital, adding the east wing in 1961 and the west wing in 1986. The hospital was affiliated with Sutter Health from 1995 to 2010, when

it returned to Marin Healthcare District control. Campus redevelopment is necessary in part to comply with state regulations requiring seismic upgrade or replacement of all California general and acute-care hospitals at risk of collapse during a strong earthquake. MGH is classified as an acute-care facility, and District officials determined that it would be more feasible to fulfill the seismic regulations by replacing the existing hospital to meet current medical and market standards at the same time.

Traffic and parking concerns

Community concerns, reflected in the minutes of the Kentfield Planning Advisory Board beginning in 2010, include mass of the enlarged campus, but the predominant concern has focused on the effects on local traffic including prolonged construction-related disruptions and parking demand. MCL was concerned about these and other impacts and submitted extensive comments when the Draft Environmental Impact Report was published in 2012.

The first plans submitted proposed a seven-story parking garage almost flush with Bon Air Road and directly across from Hal Brown Creekside Park. This was widely viewed as too visually overwhelming and was replaced in the plan with two smaller garages: one built into the hill and one closer to Bon Air Road. Construction of the garage closest to Bon Air Road is linked to the outpatient services building; if that building is not constructed, it is possible that the second garage would not be built.

Area traffic will be disrupted during the prolonged construction period.

The hospital is a major traffic generator in an already congested area. Almost 90 percent of its workforce drives solo to work. The average home to work distance of about 19 miles makes walking and biking unrealistic commute alternatives for most workers. The District assists employees in locating carpool and ride share opportunities but has resisted requests for dedicated buses or vanpools. The EIR for the project verifies that the project will



Dru Parker

The 90 parking spaces MGH leases from St. Sebastian's Church fill up early.

have a significant impact on traffic and intersection waiting times on area roads. Construction-related traffic also will have a significant, if temporary, impact on area roads. County Public Works staff have asked for a detailed construction traffic control plan, as required by the EIR, and are working with the Healthcare District on further changes to Bon Air Road. At the same time that construction is expected to commence in fall 2015, Caltrans will begin work on seismic retrofit of the Bon Air Bridge, a project that will cause its own traffic disruptions, compounding the area-wide problem.

The hospital's parking need historically has exceeded the number of parking spaces provided on campus. Even leasing 90 spaces at St. Sebastian's Church does not prevent staff and visitors from parking along Bon Air Road and nearby residential streets. This creates a conflict with members of the public who also need parking to use the Corte Madera Creek multi-use path and Creekside Park facilities. Adding more than 400 new employees will exacerbate existing traffic and parking problems. With construction about to begin Kentfield and Greenbrae community groups will continue to work on these issues with County staff and elected officials.

MCL Business Member Profile

Fairfax Lumber & Hardware

by Linda Novy

Fairfax Lumber and Hardware Co. is an important part of Marin County's history. Established in 1912, the company's building and yard was formerly a lumber mill sited alongside train tracks for access to deliveries from the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. From this early beginning, the company has developed into a full service building, hardware, and garden resource center that earned it the nationwide *ProDealer of the Year* award in 2007. What makes Fairfax Lumber special is that its staff and product line offers commercial and residential customers alternative green solutions. With its emphasis on sustainable energy and resource conserving product offerings, Fairfax Lumber is a natural fit with Marin Conservation League and other business members sharing the League's focus on environmental stewardship.

These core environmental values are demonstrated through the company's Fairfax Green Program, which features sustainable timber products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, an organization focused on the responsible management of forests worldwide (us.fsc.org). And it's not just the lumber department that provides environmentally friendly products along side more traditional products. The entire store gives customers alternative "green" choices, and its experienced staff is always available to guide customers' choices. To back up its environmental commitment to the community, the company showcases educational programs in the "growing greener" arena. Recent topics have included home canning, integrated pest



Employee owners of Fairfax Lumber & Hardware, 109 Broadway, Fairfax

management, composting, and organic soil preparations.

Another key feature of the Fairfax Green Program is the non-profit "The Away Station" (TAS). Fairfax Lumber has teamed up with TAS to create a market place for the donation and sale of salvaged materials from deconstruction and remodel projects plus other home improvements. You'll find lots of variety in its inventory which includes lumber, building materials, cabinetry, windows and doors, as well as appliances, household items, and garden products. It's a win-win-win: donors receive a tax credit donation slip, TAS helps give the products and materials an extended lifecycle, and the customer finds something unique for a good value. It's not unusual to see a Fairfax Lumber customer walking out to their truck or car with something new and something recycled from TAS! The company's efforts have been recognized by being awarded the Best in Marin for the Hardware Store Category, and also by Senator Mark Leno and former

Assemblyman Jared Huffman, for its green business model.

Underpinning the company's solid place in the community are the employee owners of Fairfax Lumber who are proud of their 100% ownership of the company. The "ESOP" was founded in the late '70s and the company became 100% employee owned in 1986. The staff of owners at Fairfax Lumber demonstrate pride of ownership that's grounded in professionalism. They are pleased to be business members of the Marin Conservation League and we're proud to have them!

For more information about Marin Conservation League's Business Members, visit marinconservationleague.org/resources/business-members.

To join MCL as a Business Member call 415-485-6257. Business Members receive their own page on the MCL website as well as other benefits.

RTMP *from page 2*

How the process will work

Putting the RTMP “on the ground” has two parts: the first is to determine (“designate” in planning-speak) the Open Space District’s existing system of roads and trails, and the second is to entertain proposals each year from staff and the public for new projects, such as a change-in-use of a road or trail, rehabilitating old or building new trails, decommissioning redundant “social” trails, and so forth. Over the next two years, Region by Region, District (Marin County Parks) staff, with public input, will designate the roads and trails that make up the current system in each preserve. By applying an “Evaluation Tool” and other criteria, staff will compute an environmental baseline score for each Region to serve as a starting point for evaluating the environmental impacts of future projects and management actions. The intent is to consistently reduce the total score (i.e., “impacts”) for each Region so as to achieve net environmental benefit, even as new trails or recreational uses might be added to the system or changed.

Region 1, the first to be “designated”, includes King Mountain, Baltimore Canyon,

Blithedale Summit, Camino Alto, Alto Bowl, and Horse Hill Open Space Preserves (OSPs). A public workshop is scheduled for March 22 at the Mill Valley Community Center, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., to consider the staff’s proposal for designation of those trails and roads.

Region 2, which includes Giacomini and Cascade Canyon OSPs, among others, will follow sometime this summer. At these community meetings, the public can comment on the District’s draft recommendations and presumably influence their decisions. At the first meeting, staff will also introduce “project intake” forms—the forms on which proposed new projects must be submitted for consideration by the Department in annual budgeting.

Many public meetings and hearings on the RTMP over the past four years have been dominated by an organized “bloc” of mountain bikers advocating for opening narrow trails. Now, it is essential that other users—the walkers, hikers, joggers, equestrians, plant people, bird watchers, and others—also attend and make their voices heard. Visit marinparks.org and search for “Road and Trail Management Plan” for ongoing information.

—Nona Dennis, Editor

Behind every editor is another editor. . .

A lot of writing on a lot of subjects goes into the MCL *Newsletter*. A constant danger is that “planner-speak” and “enviro-jargon,” familiar to some but unfamiliar to many, will creep in and leave readers scratching their heads—or that the author will go on and on. . .

For these reasons, someone needs to review draft articles not only for relevance, but also for clarity and conciseness. Will the intelligent reader who is otherwise not familiar with a topic get the point—and with fewer words?

That is the behind-the-scenes task of **Ken Drexler**, MCL Board member and treasurer for many years, and attorney in his day-job. Ken methodically reads almost all drafts, deletes words, clarifies sentences, or poses questions in the margin: “What are you trying to say?” If the *Newsletter* is indeed as clear as we hope you find it, you can thank Ken for his attention to detail!

Interested in the issues? Come to an Issue Committee Meeting!

Issue Committee members study projects and proposals and recommend actions to the MCL Board of Directors. Committee meetings are open to the public... but only MCL members can vote on actions. Join us and see first-hand how MCL influences local policy and decisions! Visit marinconservationleague.org/about-us/issues-committees for more information.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE COMMITTEE monitors, reviews and comments to public agencies and decision-makers on agricultural land use planning issues. Meets quarterly. *Co-Chairs: Sally Gale & Judy Teichman.*

LAND USE and TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE monitors, reviews and comments to public agencies and decision-makers on land use planning issues of countywide significance. Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month. *Chair: Susan Stompe.*

PARKS and OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE advocates for parks and public open space in Marin by participating in planning processes that involve federal, state and county

lands in Marin. Meets the 2nd Thursday of each month. *Chair: Nona Dennis.*

CLIMATE ACTION WORKING GROUP focuses on cooperative efforts between agencies to combat the effects of climate change on a countywide basis. Meets on the 3rd Friday of the month. *Co-chairs: Doug Wilson & Pam Reaves.*

NORTH MARIN UNIT tracks issues and projects in the Novato area and makes recommendations to the appropriate Issues Committee. Meeting dates and locations vary. *Chair: Susan Stompe.*

WATER and WATERSHEDS PROGRAM SERIES consists of informational sessions with guest speakers on a variety of water-related topics. Meets the last Thursday of the month. *Co-Chairs: Priscilla Bull & Ann Thomas.*

INVASIVE PLANT SUBCOMMITTEE of the Parks and Open Space Committee focuses on non-native, invasive species and their effects on county ecosystems. Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month. *Chair: Paul Minault.*

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the MCL office and are open to the public.

Staff

Dru Parker, Operations Manager

Shannon Doherty, Operations Admin.

Contact Information

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mcl@marinconservationleague.org

Issue Committee Meeting Schedule (subject to change—check website)

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

Invasive Plant Subcommittee of P&OS:

3rd Wed. of the month, 3:00—5:00 PM

Water & Watersheds: Last Thurs. of the month, 4:00- 5:30 PM

Climate Action Working Group: 3rd Fri. of the month, 9:00 AM—12:00 PM

Agricultural Land Use: meets quarterly; North Marin Unit: meetings vary; Check website for times and locations

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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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Marin Conservation League Annual Meeting & Election, April 24, 2015

Proposed Slate of Officers and Directors for 2015—2016

The Marin Conservation League's Nominating Committee, chaired by Doug Wilson, has nominated the following persons for election as MCL Officers and Directors at the 2015 Annual Meeting and Election. All MCL members who attend the meeting are eligible to vote.

Nominated for Election as Officers for 2015-2016

President—Jon Elam, Mill Valley

1st Vice President—Nona Dennis, Mill Valley

2nd Vice President—Kate Powers, San Rafael

Secretary—Larry Minikes, San Rafael

Treasurer—Ken Drexler, Fairfax

Nominated for election
as Directors new to the MCL Board:

Term ending April 2017

Pat Nelson, San Rafael

Term ending April 2018

Heather Furmidge, Point Reyes Station

Doug Karpa, Mill Valley

Nominated for re-election
to the MCL Board:

Term ending April 2017

Vicki Nichols, Sausalito

Judy Teichman, Pt. Reyes Station

The following Directors
will continue to serve existing terms:

Term ending April 2016

Sally Gale, Petaluma

Randy Greenberg, Tiburon

Robert Johnston, Inverness

Larry Smith, Nicasio

Doug Wilson, Mill Valley

Term ending April 2017

Jana Haehl, Corte Madera

Linda Novy, Fairfax

Term ending April 2018

Pamela Reaves, San Rafael

Susan Stompe, Novato

Ann Thomas, Corte Madera