NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

May—June 2015

Here and there on Marin County's trails

Brad Rippe

Easy Grade Trail in Mt. Tamalpais State Park is under study for conversion to multi-use.

by Nona Dennis

Marin Conservation League thanks **Linda Dahl, Director and General Manager of Marin County Parks Department** since 2010, for her service to the county. Linda has announced she intends to retire this summer. One of Dahl's major achievements has been transformation of the Parks Department itself. Most of the same highly qualified professionals who were there in 2010 are still in the department, augmented by recent staff, but Linda can take credit for redirecting those talents into a much more effective working team. She was also a main energizer in assembling a broad coalition to support Measure A, which has restored investment in parks, agriculture, and open space throughout the county, and for spearheading the Road and Trail Management Plan.

Linda Dahl

County rolls out Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP)

MCL considers the RTMP to be more a *process* than a *road map* for the county's thirty-four Open Space Preserves. That process began officially at a Sunday

Continued on page 8

Armando Quintero serving on state Water Commission

by Ann Thomas

Last fall California voters passed Proposition 1, the $7.5 billion state water bond intended to improve the state's outdated water storage, treatment, and delivery system. Roughly two-thirds of the bond proceeds will fund watershed protection and restoration, groundwater sustainability, regional water management, recycling, water quality treatment, and flood protection. The most contentious part of the bond measure was the $2.7 billion allotted for water storage (approximately one-third of the total). Disagreement over how funds should be used will unfold as projects are proposed, evaluated, and funded.

The current long-term dry period

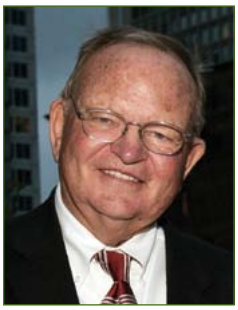
Continued on page 9

Armando Quintero

In This Issue—

President's message—page 2
Editorial—page 2
Status Updates—page 3
Events—page 6 and 7
Business member profile—page 10

A Message from the President



The dry weather this winter and early spring has brought many of us out to walk, ride horseback, or bike on the hundreds of miles of roads and trails in Marin's state and federal parklands, watersheds, and open space preserves. While we all enjoy these lands immensely, there is another side to the story. Several recent encounters between bikers and pedestrians resulted in serious injuries, including injuries to one of our board members. Such incidents remind us that we can't always count on safe and courteous trail behavior. Enforcement of rules is one approach. MCL is trying another approach, collaborating with the Marin Horse Council and Marin County Bicycle Coalition off-road program as "Trail Partners" to change the culture of trail use from confrontation to courtesy. (See page 1 Trails piece for further details.) MCL played a significant role in having many of these lands set aside for the public. We feel a continuing obligation to help keep them healthy and safe. Your support helps keep MCL's voice in the forefront of such sensible policy-making on our public lands.

Land use is always at the forefront of MCL's agenda. Over the past six months MCL's Agricultural Land Use Committee has devoted a significant amount of time to bringing many diverse interests together to study the issues involved in sustaining our important West Marin agricultural heritage in the Coastal Zone.

By the time you read this, MCL will have held its annual meeting (April 24), once again a sold-out affair. It was particularly rewarding to recognize a local leader, **Debbie Raphael**, Director of San Francisco's Department of the Environment, as our keynote speaker and to find inspiration in her message on the need for vision. The event was also a chance to greet other members and local government leaders and introduce new Board members. Watch these pages in the fall as we tell you more about these new MCL leaders and Board members.

Thank you for your support and interest over the past year. I have been honored to hear from you and will continue to work in the coming year to help address your concerns and issues.

Jon Elam

Editorial

GGNRA's incoming superintendent faces challenges

MCL is pleased to welcome **Christine Lehnertz** as the new superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Lehnertz is no stranger to Bay Area federal parks. From 2010 until recently, she served the National Park Service as Pacific West Regional Director, overseeing 61 national parks in eight states and three U.S. territories. She joined the NPS in 2007 as deputy superintendent of Yellowstone National Park after a lengthy career as a biologist for conservation agencies and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

NPS

Christine Lehnertz

Lehnertz comes to GGNRA at a time when the 80,000-acre park faces unusual challenges. Not the least of these is balancing protection of the park's diverse natural resources and cultural artifacts with increasing demands for recreational access to what is already the nation's most-visited national park. More than 17 million visitors in a year confirm its reputation as a local, regional, and national treasure. But popularity has consequences!

GGNRA parklands in Marin County (over half of the total) are subject to the same pressures that confront the rest of the park. Traditional recreational uses such as hiking, road-biking and horseback riding have increased in past decades, joined by more recent pursuits such as mountain biking and hang gliding. Dog walking, camping, day use/picnicking, and special events in the park are all on the rise. And with these increases have come greater opportunity for conflicts between hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, and dog walkers, and greater impacts on both natural and cultural resources, including habitat fragmentation, eroding trails, vegetation trampling, wildlife disturbance, litter, vandalism, and graffiti. Add to these the uncertainties of climate change and shifts in visitor demographics, and one can see challenges in many dimensions.

Recreation vs. protection of resources?

Many have found something to complain about in the January 2015 updated General Management Plan (GMP) for the GGNRA, a plan that took a decade to complete. The park service has been the object of particular criticism in southern Marin County as endless traffic to Muir Woods, Stinson Beach, and other points west effectively traps local residents in their homes on weekends and holidays. At the same time that locals are at odds with the park service over traffic and parking issues outside Muir Woods and failing to limit visitor numbers, others (see saveourrecreation.com) are accusing the park service of limiting access

Continued on page 11

Status Updates

North-South Greenway

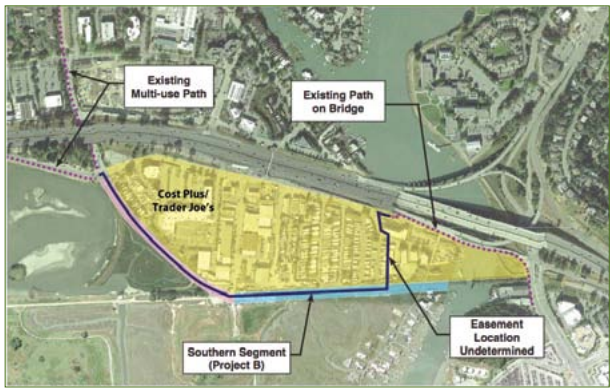
Bicycle commuters and pedestrians have long been challenged by the inconvenience and hazards of negotiating a route between areas of Central Marin north and south of Corte Madera Creek—that is, getting safely through the convoluted Greenbrae highway interchange on bike or on foot. Among the environmental challenges is the need to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive wetland habitats that could result from a new crossing of Corte Madera Creek or construction in the adjacent Corte Madera Ecological Reserve.

Engineers began exploring options for a multi-use pathway (MUP) in the early 2000s, and by 2004 were planning a project known as the Central Marin Ferry Connection Project (CMFCP). The CMFCP project is also referred to as the North/South Greenway and is part of the Bay Trail planning process.

With the recent installation of a new bicycle-pedestrian bridge over East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, with ADA-compliant ramps on the southern end of the bridge, the CMFCP is at last underway and eventually will provide a safe and separate multi-use pathway at this crossroads for almost all trips between central and southern Marin County. The first phase of the project will be completed this year, when the bicycle-pedestrian bridge over East Sir Francis Drake is completed and linked to the ferry terminal.

The new bridge will eventually link the Cal Park Hill Tunnel in Larkspur to a new 12-foot-wide multi-use pathway attached to the east side of the Hwy 101 northbound off-ramp bridge that crosses Corte Madera Creek. Caltrans will soon begin work on this off-ramp pathway, identified as the second phase of the CMFCP. This segment has been designed so as to avoid the need to build a new, separate bridge for bikes and pedestrians across Corte Madera Creek.

Caltrans, as lead agency, is responsible for CEQA (environmental) clearance for the new and wider multi-use path supported by the concrete 'bent caps' that extend out from the east side of the bridge. This section of the Greenway will end approximately where a narrow, existing pedestrian path adjacent to the roadbed ends at Old Redwood Highway near Industrial Way. Larkspur will have approval authority over any new construction within their jurisdiction, as well as the pathway along the 'bent cap' segment, which Larkspur will continue to maintain.



Aerial from Google Earth Pro 2013 with additional information from CH2M HILL.

Left—A map showing the proposed multi-use path (MUP) west of the Greenbrae industrial area and Marketplace shopping center.

Below— A new MUP will be constructed atop the concrete "bent caps" that jut out from the east edge of the bridge over Corte Madera Creek. The existing path is too narrow for safe multi-use.

Dru Parker

The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) is the lead agency for the third phase of the CMFCP, which will take the Greenway multi-use path south to Wornum Drive and then west to meet the Sandra Marker Trail at Tamal Vista. The CMFCP's preferred alternative shows this part of the Greenway constructed west of the levee and former Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP) tracks. (See map) That alignment will require negotiating an easement through one of the private properties between the end of the 'bent cap segment' at Old Redwood Highway and the former NPW right-of-way, which is now owned by SMART.

The new path will be kept away from the marshes of the Ecological Reserve.

If, as assumed, the southern segment of the North/South Greenway multi-use-path is located on the west side of the levee, it will be adjacent to the back sides of the developed properties fronting on Old Redwood Hwy, including the Larkspur Plaza Shopping Center (Cost Plus World Market and Trader Joe's), the PG&E transmission yard, Rich Readimix cement company, and several mobile home and RV parks. This will keep it away from the marshes of the Ecological Reserve. The argument for having the multi-use-path on the west side of the former NWP railroad levee rather than on heavily-traveled Old Redwood Highway is that the width on the old highway is insufficient to provide a safe and separate multi-use-path, and that the many driveways present a hazard to bicyclists and pedestrians.

TAM continues to seek public input on this project, which has great potential to improve safety and lure more people to bike and walk to Larkspur Landing, the Ferry and future SMART Station. Project designers are urging the public to learn more about the project and take their online survey. After obtaining public input on design goals and guidelines, the design team will present design alternatives this summer. For more information, see tam.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=349.

—Jana Haehl

Continued on page 4

Status Updates *from page 3*

Marinwood Plaza

It will be a new ballgame for Marinwood Plaza, as Supervisor Damon Connolly lays out plans to engage the community in determining how to rejuvenate this semi-abandoned site. According to Connolly, a recent proposal from BRIDGE Housing is now inactive, and the owners have placed the entirety of the Plaza property on the market for any applicant who is willing to explore a new project. And there appear to be several.

Dru Parker

Marinwood Plaza

MCL has followed attempts to redevelop Marinwood Plaza for a number of years, as one potential developer followed another and a community outreach process continued under the guidance of former Supervisor Susan Adams. (MCL *Newsletter* May-June 2014.) The site was designated as a Housing Opportunity site in the 2007 Countywide Plan. By March 2014, the community's "vision" for a mixed use complex of small retail, restaurant, market, and up to 82 residential units, 72 of them affordable, had evolved into submission of a plan to the County by owner/developer BRIDGE Housing. Environmental review was about to begin. It was a plan that MCL supported on this site, which badly needs refreshing and has the necessary preconditions for a walkable, transit-oriented, community-serving commercial center, with a residential neighborhood offering both affordable and market-rate housing.

Timing is everything however, and in this case, the timing could not have been worse for the project! Coming on the heels of the locally unpopular One Bay Area regional planning process, the County's Draft Housing Element, the visually emergent 180-unit WinCup housing project in Corte Madera, and the Larkspur Station Area Plan, the Marinwood Plaza plan confronted deep divisions over housing growth in the County and aroused sufficient political discontent in the local community to replace a longtime County supervisor.

Since coming to the Board of Supervisors in January, Connolly has engaged in a fact-gathering mission with numerous agencies, property owners, and individuals to assess the current standing of the Marinwood Plaza project and prepare for a community outreach process, "...that will lead to a successful project founded on inclusive and collaborative community support." If the new process mimics its predecessors, it will be several years before a plan is supported and again reaches the environmental review stage.

Next steps—clean up contaminated groundwater

In the meantime, there is actually new news. One constraint to developing the site was identified as a plume of contaminated groundwater that originated from a former dry cleaning establishment. The plume had migrated under Highway 101 onto Silveira property to the east. Connolly reports that this is now being dealt with as a separate project with its own timeline, unrelated to the redevelopment project. The property owners have retained an independent engineering firm to conduct testing and confirm definitively the total extent of the plume on the Silveira property before settling on a long-term remediation work plan. By the end of 2015, the owners must submit a "Final Action Plan" to the Regional Water Quality Control Board, which is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the clean-up process complies with state water quality regulations. Once it is deemed acceptable, the plan will be put into action. Connolly is tracking this process.

Hamilton recreation proposal submitted

A new plan has been submitted to the City of Novato for a commercial recreation development at Hamilton Field. Two years ago the same proponents proposed a much larger project for this area. That proposal was never formally submitted to the city. (MCL *Newsletter* March/April 2013). The current proposal covers 55 acres at the north end of the Hamilton development and includes Landfill 26, a capped former landfill owned by the federal government. The applicant has received approval from the federal government to use the site for recreational purposes. Its proposal includes five baseball fields, one of which would be lighted and have stadium seating for about 1,000 people, two multiuse fields, a community park, a new access road and a nature interpretive facility next to the restored marsh that now covers the former airport runway. In comparison, the earlier proposal covered 88 acres and included nine baseball fields, four soccer fields, a 130,000 sq. ft. indoor sports facility, a 40,000 sq. ft. hotel, and parking for 1,700 cars.

Neighbors and the larger Novato community have strong feelings about the project. Those supporting it point out the community's need for playing fields, the city's and school district's inability to fund this kind of facility, the reduced size from

Continued on page 5

Status Updates

Hamilton *from page 4*

the original plan, and the inclusion of a nature interpretive facility. Those opposed feel that a fee-based commercial facility is not consistent with the recreational designation of the site; the lights and noise will be detrimental to wildlife newly attracted to the adjacent marsh; the traffic will exceed the capacity of local roadways; and the adjacent neighborhood will be negatively impacted by noise and lights, as well as traffic.

The project is being shown by the applicants to community groups for their input. The application will be subjected to a full EIR, so there will be multiple opportunities for public comment. The North Marin Unit of MCL is tracking the project closely. —*Susan Stompe*

Dru Parker

The Hamilton recreational facility would include Landfill 26, the large green "field" between Reservoir Hill, Ammo Hill, and the Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project.

Local Coastal Program approval delayed

The most recent *Newsletter* report on progress of Marin's Local Coastal Program Update (LCP) assumed that the almost 8-year process would be finished by now. Not so. Faced with procedural deadlines with only a few issues still unresolved between County and Coastal Commission staff, the County took the procedural option of withdrawing the LCP from action by the Coastal Commission at its April 16 meeting in Marin Supervisors' chambers. The goal is for staff to resolve the few issues remaining and return to the Commission at its November meeting in Half Moon Bay for approval of the LCP. Until the Coastal Commission certifies the County's LCP Amendment, the County's coastal zone will continue to be governed by the County's original LCP certified in 1982.

Several issues have been resolved since the Commission hearing a year ago. For example, the Commission approved incorporating provisions for intergenerational housing in the LCP as a means of preserving Marin's family farm tradition. However, there are differing perspectives on how to best reach that goal. Unresolved details include whether the limitations that go with intergenerational housing apply to all contiguous "legal lots" owned by the rancher and whether the limitations apply when the rancher has only a partial interest in a legal lot.

Staff also agreed to limit on-farm retail sales to goods produced on the ranch or on other ranches owned or leased by the operator of the facility. Including goods from other ranches in Marin and Sonoma, while acceptable to neighbors on Shoreline Highway, would require a use permit with opportunity for public review.

The most substantial remaining issue is the Commission staff proposal to require ranchers to obtain a permit to diversify agricultural production. The County and ranchers argued for flexibility in rotating or converting crops, stating that potential impacts on environmentally sensitive resources are already prohibited. Several members of the Commission urged staff to identify and limit the permit requirement to specific activities that might have a permanent impact on the land, such as terracing or deep tilling for viticulture. This issue is pending resolution.

Other residual issues relate to expanding regulation to protect against environmental hazards. The challenge is to find a workable solution while the potential for damage from sea level rise is still under study.

—*Nona Dennis and Judy Teichman*

Senior and worker housing on Grady Ranch?

Filmmaker George Lucas has a new development proposal: housing for seniors and workers on 52 acres of his 1,039-acre Grady ranch in Lucas Valley. Lucas plans to finance the project entirely from his own resources. The project would accommodate 224 households in four building clusters ranging in height from two to four stories, as well as four parking garages. The structures would not be visible from Lucas Valley Road. This concept is markedly different from previous plans for dispersed residential development on the site.

While MCL opposed a 2012 Lucasfilm plan to construct a film studio at Grady Ranch based on the massive scale of the project and its major reshaping of Miller Creek, the new proposal is a completely different concept which will be studied by MCL's Land Use Committee.

In the meantime, at *Newsletter* press time in late April, the application was due to be submitted to the County. It will take a number of months for the County to determine that the application is complete. At some point an EIR will be prepared. If the project passes all the hurdles, ground-breaking could be as early as 2018.

Annual Dinner speaker Debbie Raphael inspires sell-out crowd at Key Room April 24

Many thanks to the more than 130 people who attended Marin Conservation League's sold-out 2015 Annual Dinner on April 24th at the Key Room at Homeward Bound's New Beginnings Center in Hamilton. This year's event featured **Debbie Raphael,** San Francisco Department of the Environment Director, as Keynote Speaker. Her inspirational talk can be viewed online at https://youtu.be/DeUDyiMY2QM.

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

Officers for the 2015—2016 term are: **Jon Elam**, President; **Nona Dennis**, 1st Vice President; **Kate Powers**, 2nd Vice President; **Larry Minikes**, Secretary; and **Ken Drexler**, Treasurer. **Vicki Nichols** and **Judy Teichman** were elected to new three-year terms as directors. Three new directors were named to the Board: **Pat Nelson, Doug Karpa and Heather Furmidge.** MCL is very grateful for the service of departing board member **Jill Templeton**.

MCL's 2015 Awards for Environmental Leadership were introduced by Linda **Novy**. Recently retired U.S. Representative **George Miller** was honored with the *Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Award* for his many years of leadership and dedication to the environment over a 40-year career in the House. **Rick Fraites** accepted the award on Miller's behalf.

The **Marin Open Space Trust** **(MOST)** received the *Marin Green Award for Environmental Leadership* for its efforts to preserve open space lands in Marin, including its recent success in acquiring Sky Ranch for the County; and the *John M. McPhail, Jr. Green Business Award* went to **Lafranchi Ranch**, a family-owned dairy and organic cheesemaker that has demonstrated that organic and environmentally sensitive ranching is a successful business model.

photos by Jana Haehl

Clockwise from top: Debbie Raphael; William Hough, Rika Gopinath; Liza Prunuske, Steven Chatham, Laurette Rogers; Rick Lafranchi; William Long, Tieli Ma Long. More photos on page 12.

The *Ted Wellman Water Award* was given to **Prunuske Chatham, Inc.**, a firm of environmental scientists and engineers working with landowners, local agencies, and organizations to protect and restore watersheds and habitat. **Priscilla Bull** was the well-deserved recipient of the MCL *Volunteer of the Year Award.*

Raffle prize winners were **Andrina Ruzick, Ann Thomas, Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Nancy Praetzel** and **Elias Olson.**

MCL is grateful to Chair Jon Elam's Annual Dinner committee of **Jana Haehl, Kate Powers** and **Ken Drexler** and to MCL staff **Dru Parker** and **Shannon Doherty**. Kudos to raffle prize gatherer extraordinaire **Vicki Nichols**, and to photographer and Marin County Open Space ranger **Craig Solin**, who donated his stunning nature photos for the award plaques. A very special thanks to Homeward Bound **Chef Jacques Kirk** for the complimentary platters of the Lafranchis' Nicasio Valley cheeses, as well as to the professional staff of the Key Room.

Events

Saturday, June 20, 10 a.m. —12:30 p.m.

Meet a dairy, a cheese maker and an energy challenge

Bob Giacomini and his four daughters are the people behind what has become an internationally known source for prize-winning cheeses. They operate a dairy, a cheese-making operation—the Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Company—and The Fork, a culinary center focused on education for visitors to the farm. MCL is pleased to sponsor a visit to this picturesque 720-acre dairy on the east shore of Tomales Bay on Saturday, June 20. It will be an opportunity to see first-hand the sustainable farming practices and humane animal care that earned the ranch the (Aldo) Leopold Conservation Award in 2013. It will also be an opportunity to learn about some of the energy and economic challenges facing small dairies in Marin and Sonoma Counties.

Dairies are among the largest consumers of electricity in Marin and Sonoma Counties. Bob Giacomini was one of the first dairy operators to install a digester and convert methane into clean renewable energy to power the dairy and, later, its cheese-making facilities. For most smaller dairies methane digesters are prohibitively expensive, requiring operators of small dairies to stretch to achieve economies of scale needed to carry out energy efficient and energy renewable projects.

The program will include a tour of the dairy behind the Cheese Company, where we will learn the history of the farm, meet the herd, learn about sustainable farming and see the milking barn. Bob Giacomini and Tom Flynn, of the TSF Group, will provide some insights into a newly formed "Energy Alliance," an effort to help smaller to mid-size dairies network to achieve needed economies of scale. (The Energy Alliance is based on a group technical assistance and purchasing program of the U.S. Department of Energy.) The event will wrap up with a seated, focused cheese tasting with a Point Reyes Farmstead representative.

The fee for this event is $20. It is open to the public but reservations are required by Monday, June 15. Reservations can be made online at mclcheese.eventbrite.com **or call 415-485-6257. The farm is located three miles north of Point Reyes Station, 14700 Highway One.**

Business-Environment Breakfast, Friday, May 15, 7:30—9:00 a.m., McInnis Park Clubhouse

State Senator Mike McGuire to discuss upcoming term

Join MCL for our spring breakfast meeting with **Senator Mike McGuire**, California 2nd Senate District, North Coast/North Bay.

Senator McGuire will update us on upcoming state environmental legislation and give us an overview of what to expect from Sacramento in the coming months.

The senator is a third generation Northern Californian, and was first elected to public office at age 19. He lives in Healdsburg.

The talk will take place at McInnis Park Golf Clubhouse, 350 Smith Ranch Road, San Rafael at 7:30 AM. The fee is $15 for MCL members and $20 for the general public. A full breakfast buffet is included. Pre-registration is required. Call MCL at 415-485-6257 to pay by phone, or register online at EventBrite (surcharge will apply).

Senator Mike McGuire

Ticket price includes full breakfast buffet.

Pre-registration required by May 11.

Make checks payable to **MCL** *and mail to:* **MCL, 175 N. Redwood Dr., Ste. 135, San Rafael, CA 94903.** *To pay with credit card, call* **415-485-6257 or register online at** EventBrite.

Refunds given only if the event is canceled.

Sponsored in part by:

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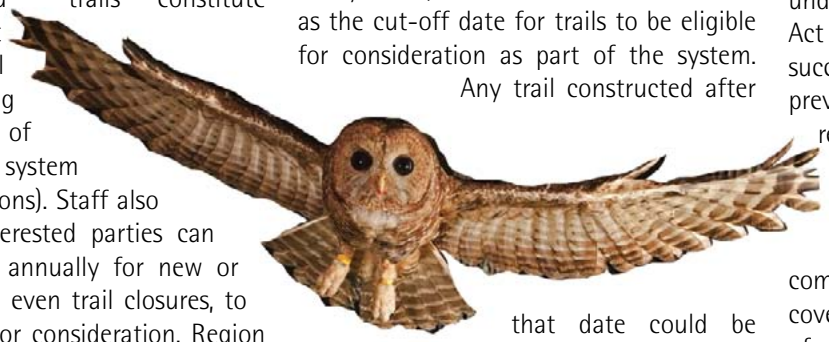
Trails *from page 1*

workshop in March attended by an estimated 200 outdoor enthusiasts: mountain bikers seeking access to narrow trails; walkers, joggers, equestrians, birders, and botanists interested in maintaining safety on existing trails and preventing damage to plants and wildlife; and neighbors championing local foot paths.

County Parks staff outlined the process by which the Department will determine which roads and trails constitute the current ("Baseline") Trail System, beginning with Region 1 of the preserve system (There are six regions). Staff also outlined how interested parties can submit proposals annually for new or modified trails, or even trail closures, to the Department for consideration. Region I extends across the northeastern flank of Mt. Tamalpais from Mill Valley to Kentfield and includes four preserves, three of which contain critical habitat for the threatened Northern spotted owl (pictured). The Department will next tackle Region 2, which includes the heavily used Cascade Canyon, Giacomini, Roy's Redwoods, White Hill, and Loma Alta Preserves.



As the process continues through the regions, interested parties can begin to submit their own proposals for additions to the road and trail system. MCL expects that protecting sensitive resources from excessive recreational use will be countered with demands for increased access. The governing principle of the RTMP is to reduce overall environmental impacts across the preserves over time, even as recreation increases. MCL will participate closely to ensure that this principle holds true and that shared-use trails remain safe for all users.

County Parks closes illegal trail in San Geronimo Valley

Recent reporting of the closing of an illegal trail in Giacomini Open Space Preserve missed key points that support the action taken by Marin County Parks. In 2012 the County, with major grant assistance and many public donations, purchased the 22-acre "Morrison Property" in San Geronimo Valley. In recent months, County Parks closed a trail that had been illegally cut on that property, first in 2012 and again in early 2015. Local residents claimed that a footpath had pre-existed the County's acquisition. If it did exist, it was on private property and therefore was not included in the County's 2011 inventory of roads and trails. The RTMP (Chapter 4, Policy SW.2) established November 2011 as the cut-off date for trails to be eligible for consideration as part of the system. Any trail constructed after that date could be decommissioned at the discretion of the Department.

The first illegal trail was cut during the spring of 2012, when the County's pending purchase of the property became known. Parks staff covered both ends with brush, and posted "trail closed" signs. Early this year, the trail was re-opened illegally by removing the obstructions and digging new benches across waterways. Parks staff again closed the trail, this time by felling trees and piling already downed trees in a renewed attempt to block access. The County staff described its methods for closing trails as "standard" when queried by MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee. The conclusion of the Committee was that the County Parks' action in closing the trail was entirely justified.

State Parks converts Easy Grade and Bill's Trails to multi-use

The Superintendent of Marin Sector State Parks announced recently that State Parks staff is evaluating the possible conversion of Easy Grade Trail in Mt. Tamalpais State Park to multi-use to allow access for mountain bikes. This is not a complete surprise. In 2007, California State Parks began to implement in Marin a new state-wide policy to increase access to all Park facilities for a variety of users, in particular for mountain bikes. China Camp State Park trails already had been designated as multi-use for bikers, hikers and equestrians.

Four trails in Marin State Parks were identified in 2008 as candidates for conversion to multi-use. The first to be studied further was the 3.9-mile Bill's Trail in Samuel P. Taylor Park. In 2009, MCL challenged State Parks' attempt to convert that trail to multi-use without review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Over two years' time, MCL was successful in forcing an EIR but failed to prevent the conversion. Bill's Trail is under reconstruction and is expected to reopen to mountain bikes, horses, and hikers in 2016.

In the meantime, State Parks commissioned a Programmatic EIR to cover a wide range of possible impacts of similar road or trail conversions in any park in the state and thereby fulfill most CEQA requirements for such projects, lacking only site-specific study of impacts unique to a particular project. That is the process under which proposed conversion of East Grade Trail will be evaluated. Easy Grade is a favored foot-path for hikers between Pantoll Camp and the Mt. Theater. Mountain bikers have been advocating for access to the trail for many years. The public was notified of possible change in use for the trail in late March. The evaluation and design process, as laid out in the Programmatic EIR, has just begun, and the plan appears to be headed for implementation sometime in 2016 or 2017. MCL will track the process and comment later this year. *[The print version of this Newsletter erroneously reports that Easy Grade is currently open to equestrians. It is hiking only. MCL regrets the error.]*

MCL responds to trail issues

MCL Trail Policy

The prominence of trail issues over the past few years has gained considerable attention from MCL. In addition to participating in all aspects of the RTMP process and commenting on trail issues

Continued on page 9

Trails *from page 8*

on other public lands, MCL has developed its own recommendations concerning environmental and safety standards for management and recreational use of trails on public lands. MCL's **2015 Trail Policy** (see marinconservationleague.org/advocacy) notes the rich parkland, open space, and watershed resources that Marin residents and others can enjoy. It also describes the mounting threats of overuse and outlines the conditions and standards that MCL believes are necessary to protect the physical, biological, aesthetic, and safety qualities that make our public lands so appealing to so many.

Trail Partners Safe Trails Campaign

MCL recognizes that Marin County roads and trails are known for long-standing, simmering differences between equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers, and dog-walkers. On occasion the simmering heats to a boil, and someone is injured. Often, walkers and equestrians fear an unexpected encounter with a speeding biker, while many bikers feel that they are unfairly accused of dangerous behavior, when in fact it may be a minority of "rogue" bikers who are responsible.

Slow and Say Hello!

There is no ready solution beyond increased enforcement of regulations, which is limited by staff resources. As an alternative, MCL has been collaborating with Marin Horse Council (MHC) and Marin County Bicycle Coalition's off-road program (MCBC) as "Trail Partners" to examine the causes of conflicts on trails and to develop a campaign focused on changing trail culture from conflict to courtesy. The effort is being supported financially by Marin's public land managers, who deal with conflict and illegal behaviors daily. The Trail Partners plan to launch the campaign on National Trails Day, June 6.

The Partners will be asking people on the trail, especially the faster moving mountain bikers, to **"Slow and Say Hello"**—"Hello" can be as simple as a "Hi", a wave, a smile, or a nod. It means acknowledging and respecting the presence of others on multi-use roads and trails and sharing responsibility for lands everyone can enjoy.

Quintero *from page 1*

has heightened public demand for more storage. It has also strengthened fears that funds will be used to subsidize ill-conceived major dam construction projects producing little new water but creating diversions that would damage fisheries.

Proposition 1 spending decisions will be spread among a tangle of agencies and individuals. The $2.7 billion for water storage funds, however, will be administered solely by the California Water Commission, comprised of nine residents appointed by the Governor.

San Rafael resident Armando Quintero, a member of the Marin Municipal Water District board of directors, was tapped by Governor Jerry Brown last year to serve on the nine-member Commission. Armando spoke in late March to the MCL Water Program about requirements for use of the storage funds and the Water Commission's daunting task ahead. His measured assessment of what could emerge from the upcoming decision-making process gave hope that storage projects funded by the bond could belie concerns about the impacts of new surface storage raised during the election campaign. However, he admitted that he is only one member of a commission representing diverse interests in the state.

Armando's overview included these comments:

- Bond proceeds must fund public benefits of storage projects, such as restoring habitats, improving water quality, reducing damage from floods, responding to emergencies such as fire, and improving recreation.
- One half of the $2.7 billion for water storage must be used to fund ecosystem benefits.
- No project shall be funded unless it provides measurable improvements to the Delta ecosystem or its tributaries.
- Ecosystem benefits could include changing the timing of water diversions, improving flow conditions or temperature, or other changes supporting restoration of aquatic ecosystems and native fish and wildlife, including ecosystems and fish and wildlife in the Delta.

Three types of storage are eligible for funding: 1) surface storage projects, such as those identified in the CALFED Bay-Delta program (Las Vaqueros Reservoir enlargement, Upper San Joaquin River Basin storage, north-of-the-Delta off-stream storage, and In-Delta projects), and local or regional surface storage projects; 2) groundwater storage and groundwater remediation projects that provide public benefits; and 3) conjunctive management of surface and groundwater storage, and reservoir reoperation (i.e., changing existing operation and management procedures for existing reservoirs and conveyance facilities to increase a variety of benefits).

Armando indicated he is skeptical about new dam construction given the lack of rain to fill existing reservoirs. For most of California, he said, construction of a new dam would just mean another empty reservoir.

No funds for projects can be awarded until December 15, 2016. Before then the Commission must create specific requirements and guidelines for how projects will be selected. In months to come the Commission will hold meetings throughout the state to solicit public input. Program funding will begin in 2017.

Regional water storage projects could affect freshwater outflow through the Bay Delta ecosystem.

Marin is not likely to be a major beneficiary of Proposition 1 water storage funds, given its local resources and the severe water shortfall elsewhere in California. However, because regional storage projects could affect freshwater outflow through the Bay Delta ecosystem, which includes Marin's bay shoreline, MCL will be closely monitoring the Water Storage Investment Program. We are fortunate to have Armando Quintero at close hand as an educational resource.

For more information, refer to The California Water Action Plan.

MCL Business Member Profile

Seagate Properties, Inc.

by Linda Novy

Seagate Properties, Inc. joined the Marin Conservation League (MCL) as a Business Member in 1998. "Joining MCL seemed like a perfect move that would align us with the important environmental values of Marin," said Dennis Fisco, Principal with Seagate. At that time, he and his partners had just moved their headquarters from San Francisco to Marin County, and they wanted more direct involvement with the Marin community. They soon gained certification as a Green Business, and in 2008 were chosen by the Marin County Board of Supervisors as the Golden Spire Business of the Year.

Seagate principals Mark Polite, Dennis Fisco, Will Polite, Wick Polite and John Conely.

Focused on using and implementing the latest in sustainable practices, Seagate built Phase II of the San Rafael Corporate Center, the first LEED-Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building for lease in the county. Consistent with their commitment to implement energy conservation measures in every facet of their business, Seagate's office buildings are all Energy Star Rated, with most being LEED rated, including a 60 year-old high rise in downtown San Francisco that received an Energy Star Rating of 100%. In another innovative program, PG&E asked Seagate and other property owners to reduce their energy consumption at one of its Class A office buildings. Seagate responded to this challenge by running fewer elevator and HVAC motors, the biggest users of energy in high rise buildings. Not only did it meet its promised 12% energy reduction, it exceeded it, saving a total of 18% in a one year period! Dennis said that the real payback of this program is "...not all dollars and cents. It's what we are doing for our tenants, the community and the environment that is an equally important bottom line for Seagate."

To help keep tenants fit and healthy, while reducing the number of cars on the road, most Seagate properties provide gyms, locker rooms, and showers, making it easier for tenants to bike to work and exercise at lunch time. Seagate's proudest achievement, however, is the co-creation of the Marin Health and Wellness Center, developed in partnership with the County of Marin. Seagate played a leading role, transforming an industrial complex into a state-of-the-art Health and Wellness Center through a process of "adaptive reuse." Now, the local community has a health center people can walk and bike to, making health care more accessible while also taking cars off the road.

Currently, Seagate's focus is on sharing its green message with tenants and vendors, which multiplies sustainable best practices throughout all its properties. If you haven't seen Seagate's marquee at Mission and Court in San Rafael, check it out! You'll see regularly changing messages of inspiration as well as community notices. We're sure you'll agree that Seagate Properties "walks the talk" in serving their tenants and the community, while meeting that environmental bottom line!

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.

GGNRA *from page 2*

for local residents to popular areas where people hike and walk their dogs. They claim the park is designated as a recreation area, and recreation should not be restricted.

A year ago, Huey Johnson, well-known conservationist who shares credit for saving the Marin Headlands from development, wrote in the Marin *IJ* (5/3/2014) that the non-profit Golden Gates Parks Conservancy is trying to limit public use of the GGNRA. Another critic (Marin *IJ*, 5/31/2014) accused the GGNRA of forsaking its founding goals: "The public doesn't need more parking lots, fences, visitor centers and interpretive signs. The people of the densely populated Bay Area need access to public open spaces." A year later, an editorial (Marin *IJ*, 3/15/2015) picked up the complaint that recreation is being "...cordoned and confined, ignoring the overriding priority of the GGNRA's formation—recreation—is somehow being ignored and short-changed."

Part of the problem is the public's apparent confusion between the GMP and the Dog Management Plan, which is still undergoing revision since receiving 4,000 comments on a draft circulated two years ago. Dogs equal recreation; therefore restricting dogs must mean restricting recreation. In fact, dog-walking is only one piece of the recreation demand.

When MCL commented on the draft GMP several years ago, we supported an alternative that was more protective of ecosystems than the alternative ultimately selected by the NPS as "Preferred"—that is, "Connecting People with Parks." In MCL's view, protecting coastal ecosystems and wildlife—is essential to maintaining the integrity of the park so that future generations can enjoy what we now treasure.

Thus, it was reassuring to read in a recent letter from the Sierra Club Bay Chapter (Marin *IJ*, 3/25/2015) that "GGNRA's statutory mission 'to preserve the recreation area, as far as possible, in its natural setting, and protect it from development and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area' has not changed over the years...not all recreational uses are compatible with resource protection or with other recreational uses." Further, the Organic Act that launched the National Park Service almost 100 years ago requires managers of our national parks: "... to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

The Organic Act has gone through many levels of interpretation, especially the term 'unimpaired,' but the basic principle of responsibility to future generations remains the same. MCL supports Superintendent Lehnertz in her efforts to fulfill that obligation. It won't be easy!

Dru Parker

Participants in an organized trail race traverse the Wolf Ridge Trail in the Marin Headlands.

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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.

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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

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

Agricultural Land Use: meets quarterly; Water and Watersheds, North Marin Unit: 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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MCL's Annual Dinner—clockwise from top left: Jenny Callaway, Faye D'Opal; Kate Colin, Stephanie Moulton-Peters; Pamela Reaves, Katie Rice, Jon Elam; Steve Kinsey, Jean Kinsey. Story on Page 6.

Jana Haehl