

Marin focuses on its waste-line

By Kate Powers

Wasteshed-watershed connection

A wasteshed is analogous to a watershed. A wasteshed collects trash and concentrates it into a waste stream that ends in a landfill. A watershed collects rainwater and urban runoff through stormwater systems, and conveys it through creeks, beyond coastlines, and ultimately to the sea. Marin's broad land-sea interface intimately links our many watersheds with nearby marine ecosystems. In the swirling mix where fresh water connects with salt water, complex food webs create a basis for life.

A primary impairment to the health of marine ecosystems is trash that accumulates in urban runoff and in our creeks. Plastics in the products we throw away often fall out of uncovered trucks, spill out of trashcans, or are tossed as litter. The gap between the amount of plastics generated each year and the amount recycled is staggering. In the ocean, plastics slowly break down into increasingly smaller pieces and absorb pollutants. As they circulate through gyres, disperse in the water column, and eventually deposit on the ocean floor, they are ingested by birds and aquatic life. Therein lies the problem: *watersheds have become wastesheds.*

Keep America Beautiful

As early as the 1950s and '60s, Americans became concerned over the litter resulting from living in a throw-away culture. An early campaign against litter was 1953's "Keep America Beautiful." As public awareness of water pollution increased,

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Mt. Tam's peak health



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The threatened Northern spotted owl (Strix occidentalis caurina) is an indicator species for Mt. Tam's ecological health. Spotted owls are under increasing pressure by incursion of Barred owls into their Northern California habitat.

By Nona Dennis

How do you measure the "ecological health" of Mt. Tamalpais—the present condition and anticipated future state of natural resources in this geologically and topographically varied and biologically rich 41,000-acre region? What do we know about the estimated 255 animal species that inhabit the mountain, 53 of them threatened, endangered, rare or sensitive; or over 1,000 known plant species? How are almost 300 non-native plant species, 60 of them critical, affecting the health of the mountain?

These are among the numerous questions being considered by ornithologists, ecologists, wildlife biologists, plant scientists, geologists and other scientists and resource managers as they prepare for a two-day symposium on October 28 and 29: "Mt.

Tam Science Summit" The symposium on the state of Mt. Tam's natural resources, the first in many years, is being convened by the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative, known as TLC or One Tam. It promises to be one of the significant Bay Area conservation events of the year.

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A Message from the President—On collective leadership

A phrase I newly understand has entered my everyday vocabulary:

"collective leadership". While its concepts and usage have been around for a while, it's taken on a new meaning

for me within the context of my role at Marin Conservation League.



MCL's Board is made up of a diverse group of leaders. We depend on each other's expertise and the communication of our individual experiences, and opinions, in making decisions. It's what feeds continuous learning that leads to the MCL Board's collective understanding.

This form of collaboration takes place not only at Board meetings but also at MCL's committee meetings and

through member communications. Past MCL board members continue to offer guidance on MCL's focus. Local elected officials, agency administrators, scientists and other informed speakers contribute information and build understanding of processes and programs that are addressing environmental issues. MCL members, many who are leaders of local environmental and other organizations, fuel conversation and inspire each other.

MCL is but one microcosm of the collective leadership and multi-stakeholder collaboration that is taking place on issues countywide. We live in an interdependent world where linear cause and effect relationships are few, and complexity is the norm. I've learned at MCL that solutions and change require continuous discourse, collaborative learning, and leadership by many individuals working toward common goals in a collective way.

While misunderstandings and hidden agendas are part of the journey, no single individual has the best solution. Each of us contributes a piece of the puzzle, new ways to see a larger context, and the possibility to make a positive difference.

The future does not just happen. We create it together. The ability to take action on issues that require urgency depends on how we each identify our leadership qualities and roles, along with our collective desire to solve problems collaboratively.

This issue of MCL's newsletter, along with MCL's upcoming workshops and events, sheds light on ways MCL and others are engaging in collective leadership. The future depends on your continuing participation.

Editorial

AB 2444 Parks bond—something for everyone

Marin Conservation League joins countless natural resource conservation, park, and municipal interests across the state in supporting AB 2444 "California Water, Climate, and Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2016."

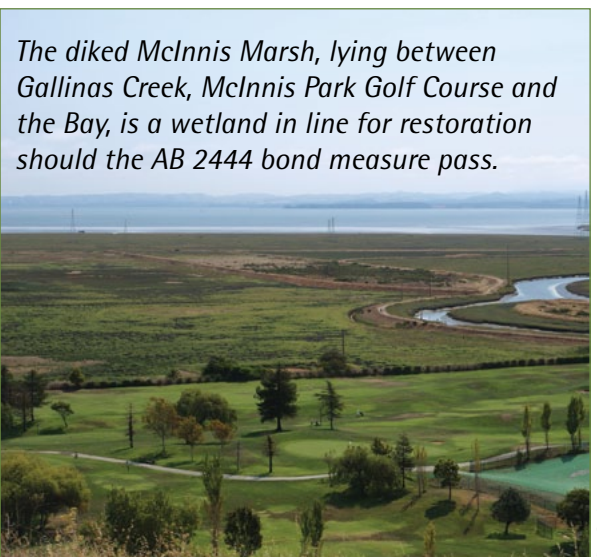
At this writing, the State Legislature was about to place a \$3.1 billion general obligation park bond on the November 2016 ballot. The bill was introduced earlier this year by Eduardo Garcia (D. Coachella) and was approved by the Assembly on June 23, 2016. At MCL's deadline, the bill faced one remaining hurdle: Senate approval.

Since 2000 California voters have approved six so-called park and/or water bonds, but there has not been a significant parks measure since Proposition 40, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act. In 2007, Proposition 84 (Safe Drinking

Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act) provided limited funding for watershed and ecosystem restoration and for habitat conservation. Proposition 1, passed in 2014, also was primarily a water bond and did not include funding for parks. The proposed AB 2444 bond measure would split \$3.1 billion roughly in three parts: \$1 billion would go to upgrade existing parks, a second billion to build new neighborhood parks in underserved communities, and a third billion to fund land conservation, water and climate change projects.

Hearing in Marin County

To show his support, Assemblymember



The diked McInnis Marsh, lying between Gallinas Creek, McInnis Park Golf Course and the Bay, is a wetland in line for restoration should the AB 2444 bond measure pass.

Dru Parker

Marc Levine, who chairs the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee, conducted a hearing in Marin on August 5. The bill's author, Assemblymember Garcia, opened by reminding attendees how

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Ranching in the Park – Not by Accident

As announced in the [May-June 2016 Newsletter](#), Marin Conservation League is hosting a series of four public workshops in September and October: **"Ranching in the Park—Not by Accident."** The workshops address the formation of the national parks in Marin and ongoing management of the dairy farms and livestock ranches whose history predates the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS or "Seashore") and that continue to thrive on parklands.

About 28,000 acres of federal parklands in West Marin are administered as agriculture by the PRNS under leases or special use permits. Of these lands, 18,000 acres are designated as "pastoral" on the Seashore, and 10,000 acres are on Golden Gate National Recreation Area land north of Bolinas and east of Highway One. The PRNS also manages the 33,000-acre Philip Burton Wilderness within the 71,000-acre Seashore. Beef cattle and dairy ranches on these federal lands constitute roughly twenty percent of overall agriculture in Marin and, as such, are an important contributor to local, sustainably-raised food. Predominantly rangeland, agriculture in the parks also provides habitat for wildlife and maintains open pastoral vistas.

In early 2014, Seashore Superintendent Cicely Muldoon announced the park's intention to begin a Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan (RCMP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) to address extending ranch leases to 20-year terms. The proposal to extend leases was pursuant to the directive of former Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar. Since that time, the public has been inundated with numerous, often conflicting news accounts and opinions. MCL is hosting these workshops to increase understanding of ranching on the lands managed by the PRNS, the relation of this ranching to the larger ranching community in Marin, and to enable informed public comment on the issues and elements that are likely to be covered in ranch management planning. (See also [March-April 2014](#), [January-February, 2015](#), and [May-June 2016](#)



"Standing Witness," oil on canvas, by Wendy Schwartz, wendyschwartz.com.

Newsletters at marinconservationleague.org/resources/newsletter.

Workshops will address key issues

The workshops, which will feature panels of knowledgeable speakers and provide ample opportunity for discussion, will be held on alternate Tuesdays, from September 13 through October 25, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. They are free and open to the public, and refreshments will be available.

September 13 (Bay Model, Sausalito): **How the Parks Came To Be.** The panel will revisit the origins, intent, and timeline in the formation of the Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, discuss why there is agriculture in both parks, and examine the multiple values and uses – natural, cultural, and recreational – that are managed by the National Park Service.

September 27 (Nicasio School): **A Day in the Life of a Rancher on PRNS.** A beef rancher and a dairyman and two academics will describe what a rancher juggles in a workday and how such factors as milk prices, feed costs, invasive weeds,

production cycles, and many others can impact a ranch's or dairy's success or failure.

October 11 (Bay Model, Sausalito): **Doing it All: Taking Care of the Land and the Ranch.** This discussion will delve into the ecosystems and other natural resources that are the endowment of the National Park Service in West Marin. By combining practices to manage grazing livestock and projects to restore and enhance habitats, ranchers can protect water quality, watersheds and the biologically diverse legacy of the parks.

October 25 (Nicasio School): **Hopes and Dreams.** The final program will be an opportunity to hear from a panel of the current and next generation of farmers and ranchers—the fourth and fifth generation ranchers—who are bringing new ideas and motivation to advance environmental stewardship and the viability of the ranches on PRNS.

Reservations for each session are required. For more information and to register for any of these workshops, go to [Eventbrite](#).

Mt. Tam *from page 1*

Locally important as a "rain collector," visually prominent throughout the Bay Area, regional magnet for recreationists for more than a century, and internationally-acclaimed biodiversity hotspot, Mt. Tam is also threatened by invasive non-native plants and animals, forest disease, buildup of wildland fuels, impacts of human activities, and the vagaries of climate change.

When Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) including Muir Woods, and Marin County Open Space District joined together in collaboration with Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy to form Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (TLC) in 2014, one of their promises was to advance the state of knowledge of Mt. Tam's biodiversity and to gain a better understanding of stressors, or threats, to that biodiversity.

These four land management agencies differ in their missions and policies, but they share common goals to preserve biodiversity and natural processes and to maintain healthy plant communities and wildlife habitats. They are all grappling with the same threats of invasive species, climate change, and the pressures of urban neighbors and human activity. The process of preparing for and presenting the symposium is one springboard to deeper understanding of how to manage these resources and threats into the future.

Convening scientists and land managers

A wealth of information about the plants, animals, and ecological processes on Mt. Tam does exist, but there also are many gaps in that knowledge. The four public agencies also have extensive knowledge of the sources and effects of stress in managing natural lands, drawn from experience, for example, in countering the spread of the Sudden Oak Death pathogen that has decimated forests and woodlands. Until now, the agencies had not joined forces to conduct a comprehensive

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A female osprey (Pandion haliaetus) in her nest. The osprey is an ecological indicator species.

assessment of Mt. Tam's ecological health. Their preparation for the symposium is proceeding in steps.

To begin the study, an advisory committee representing the Conservancy and the four agencies contacted other organizations and individuals around the country who had conducted similar ecological health assessments. Their models and guidance helped shape the assessment process and communication strategies. Next, they gathered 40 scientists and resource managers from the partner and related agencies and organizations to assess current state of knowledge in each taxonomic category of importance—plant species and communities or vegetation types, wildlife species and habitats, and so on.

Two workshops in February and March, the first devoted solely to birds, brought together 60 local and agency scientists to continue that review and discuss goals (of the assessment), information gaps and needs, and possible indicators of the health of the mountain. As a result of these discussions, indicators were narrowed to those deemed most useful representatives. These include threatened species such as Northern spotted owl, iconic species such as osprey, and unique plant communities such as serpentine chaparral. As with vital signs of human health (e.g., blood pressure, pulse, and weight), ecological indicators don't tell the whole story, but they can

be an easy way to spot early change and identify management strategies.

Out of the information and recommendations forthcoming from the workshops, project staff and collaborators developed a draft 'White Paper'—*Report on the State of Mt. Tam.* At this writing, the report was being reviewed by the workshop participants and others. In brief, it describes basic vegetation communities or habitats on Mt. Tam, ranging from redwoods to coastal grasslands; major fish and wildlife groups; selected species, such as red-legged frog, osprey, and American badger, to serve as indicators. In all cases the report assesses conditions and trends, degree of confidence in these assessments based on sufficiency of data or on expert observations or opinions, and management status.

Three products for the public will come out of this technical report, besides the report itself: an illustrated summary brochure for general readership—*Peak Health: Update on Mt. Tam's Natural Resources*; a web-based version of the summary, supported by multiple levels of data—*How Healthy is Mt. Tam: An Interactive Web Tool*; and the two-day *Mt. Tam Science Summit* on October 28 and 29. The symposium will be held at the Portuguese Cultural Center in Sausalito.

For registration information see: onetam.org/2016-mt-tam-science-summit.

AB 2444 *from page 2*



A Saturday afternoon at Pickleweed Park playground in the Canal area of San Rafael. Local parks in underserved communities across California would benefit from AB 2444 funds.

Dru Parker

long it has been since the legislature last approved a substantial funding measure designed to improve and expand park and outdoor infrastructure in the state of California; this, he said, is the first 'true park bond' in 14 years! In the meantime, unmet needs for parks operations and maintenance have been growing as more people go outdoors to recreate; deferred maintenance and other needs in the state amount to over \$5 billion, not including natural resource conservation needs.

MCL supports AB 2444—the first true park bond in 14 years.

Park and water bonds have been a primary source of funding for acquisition and improvement of parks, open space, and wildlife areas in California. Bond acts have funded support for California's 270-unit state park system, for local and regional parks, for projects that provide access to the coast and other public lands, wildlife habitat conservation needs, and for state conservancies and river restoration projects.

The 2016 AB 2444 bond places particular emphasis on safe neighborhood parks in park-poor communities; local and regional parks; trails and waterfront access; rural community recreational needs; habitat needs, including wildlife corridors; climate change adaptation; and healthy soils and forests.

MCL recognizes that there are critical needs across the state. However, significant funding for climate change adaptation could benefit local restoration projects like McInnis Marsh and Bolinas Lagoon and other shoreline restorations, as well as healthy forest work in the MMWD watershed. Marin's underfunded state parks and park-deficient neighborhoods could also benefit.

Speakers at the hearing represented a broad spectrum of Marin park interests, such as San Rafael Community Services, Marin County Parks, Friends of China Camp, Wildcare, Marin Audubon Society, Marin Conservation League, Marin Municipal Water District, Conservation Corps North Bay; and regional and statewide interests such as Surfriders, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, East Bay Regional Park District, and California State Parks Foundation.

At this writing, Marin had the assurance of strong support for the bill by Senator Mike McGuire. Only one organized opponent had surfaced: the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

—Nona Dennis, Editor

New Director Profile

David Lewis, Novato



David Lewis joined the MCL Board in April, 2016, bringing a rich background in geology, soils, and watershed hydrology. David directs the University of California Coop Extension offices in Marin and Napa Counties, where he oversees scientific research and disseminates tools and practices for integrating natural resource conservation with agricultural management in working landscapes. He is also the Watershed Management Advisor in the North Bay.

A former Peace Corps Volunteer, David worked on African food systems in Niger and trained volunteers in Zimbabwe and Albania. David holds a M.S. degree in International Agricultural Development from UC Davis.

Contact Marin's legislators via online form or by phone:

**State Senator
Mike McGuire**
sd02.senate.ca.gov
(415) 479-6612

**Assembly Member
Marc Levine**
asmcd.org/members/a10
(415) 479-4920

Upcoming Events

It's going to be a busy fall, with compelling workshops, field activities, and breakfast and evening forums and workshops. In addition to the four-part "Ranching in the Park—Not by Accident" series described on page 7, events planned by MCL alone or in collaboration, and other events of interest are listed below. Fasten your environmental seatbelts!

COASTAL CLEANUP

Saturday, September 17

9:00 a.m. – noon

Sausalito: Bay Model Visitor Center

Novato: Scottsdale Pond Gazebo

coastal.ca.gov

Join the state's largest annual volunteer event. California Coastal Cleanup Day takes place on the third Saturday of each September, along more than 2,000 miles of coastal and inland shoreline. MCL Cleanup site leaders Susan Stompe and Vicki

Nichols will once again lead groups of volunteers at Novato and Sausalito. After a morning's work, join others from around Marin at a "reward BBQ" at noon at the Bay Model. All necessary tools and supplies will be provided. Waiver is required—visit/publiced/ccd/bring.html to print at home.

LEAD ON CLIMATE

"Election 2016: Tipping Point for Climate?"

Monday, September 19

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Angelico Hall, Dominican University, San Rafael

leadonclimate.org

A \$10 donation is suggested. Congressman Jared Huffman is among the featured speakers.

PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Saturday, September 24

People have been celebrating the Centennial of the National Park Service all year, but there are still opportunities to commemorate the August 25, 1916 birth of the NPS. See onetam.org for Public lands Day information. OR, take a walk, a hike or a ride in one of Marin's popular park units—Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, and Point Reyes National Seashore—and have your own celebratory experience in the priceless natural heritage of the National Park Service in our own backyard.

MCL BUSINESS-ENVIRONMENT BREAKFAST

"The ABCs of IPM"

Friday, October 14

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.

McInnis Park Golf Clubhouse, San Rafael

marinconservationleague.org

Demystify this frequently used acronym for 'Integrated Pest Management', learn about its scientific and political history, and hear case studies about how it is being applied in managing natural and designed landscapes in Marin. A full breakfast buffet is included. Tickets are \$15 for members; \$20 for the general public. Reservations at Eventbrite, or 415-485-6257.

MT.

TAM SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

(See "Peak Health" on page 1)

Friday, October 28

Saturday, October 29

9:00 a.m.

Portuguese Cultural Center, Sausalito

onetam.org

SENIOR WALKS INTO CONSERVATION HISTORY

Thursday, September 29

Thursday, October 27

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

marinconservationleague.org

MCL's popular series of free Senior Walks funded by Measure A continues this Fall at locations to be announced. Transportation available. Call Shannon at (415)485-6257 for more information.

SEASHORE LAWSUIT UPDATE

MCL's May-June Newsletter article, "Seashore ranch planning continues," briefly describes a lawsuit alleging that the Point Reyes National Seashore has a duty to update the 1980 General Management Plan (GMP) and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before embarking on planning for leases that will continue ranching in the pastoral zone of the Seashore.

A National Park Service motion to dismiss the lawsuit was denied. Plaintiffs recently filed a motion for preliminary injunction against further work on a Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan (RCMP) and Environmental Assessment (EA). Regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit, the discussions in the workshops (Page 3) will be relevant to understanding the environmental impacts of agriculture on the Seashore, whether the issues arise in the context of updating a GMP/EIS, or developing a RCMP/EA.

—Editor

Status Updates

Easton Pt., Tiburon —back in court

This Newsletter has reported many times on the status of the 110-acre "Easton Pt." development proposed on the southern tip of Tiburon Ridge, most recently in [January 2014](#). At that time, the Board of Supervisors had recently declined to certify a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), citing the need for the development application to address unresolved environmental issues. Since October 2013, when the Board acted, the Tiburon Open Space Committee has continued to explore opportunities to protect the land from development. MCL has twice written to the Martha Company family, owners of the property, encouraging them to consider acquisition at fair market value of all or part of the environmentally constrained site that overlooks Angel Island and the Bay. Until recently, the scenic site had served as de facto "open space" for generations of local walkers, joggers, and their dogs.

In 1976, the property owners agreed upon a stipulated judgment with the county that assured them the right to develop 43 home sites on (minimum) half-acre lots and promised expedited environmental review and permitting by the County. The development proposals that followed this judgment have run into major traffic safety, slide hazard, water pressure, rare plants, hydrology, and other issues that would constrain development of the site, or at least make it very costly. EIRs have been prepared but never finalized or certified. Meanwhile the public continued to walk on the ridge until recently when the open fence that allowed access was closed off.

Now, almost three years after the Board's action not to certify the EIR, the owners are in court, claiming that the county has "unnecessarily delayed processing the applications for many years" and demanding that the county take action. A July 28, 2016, court order requires the landowner to submit revised plans that address pending issues, such as the location for a water distribution tank that can provide adequate fire-flows to all proposed

residences, an acceptable site for mitigating loss of rare plants, and other public health and safety concerns. The county, in turn, has agreed to respond to revised plans by late September and, at that time, to determine whether, based on the resubmission, it will be able to recommend that the Board of Supervisors certify the EIR by early January, 2017. If the EIR is certified, the application would move on to hearings on the merits. MCL will continue to track progress.

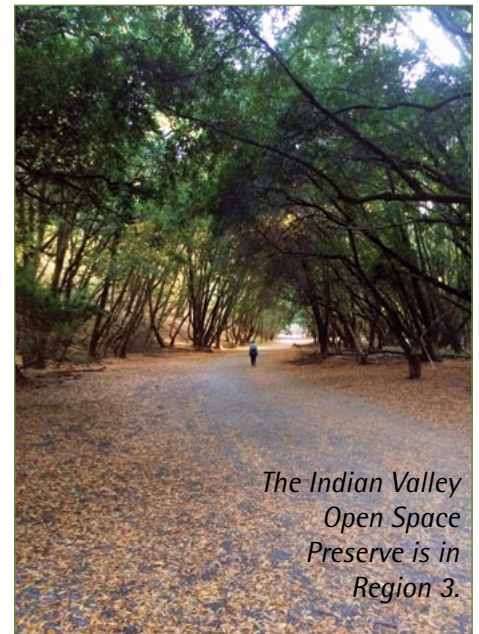
Road and Trail Plan moves on to Region 3

County Parks' staff continues to implement the 2014 Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP), proceeding through the County's 34 Open Space Preserves, Region by Region, designating which trails will be adopted into the County's permanent trail system. Staff presented a draft designation plan for Region 3 at well-attended public workshop on August 21. Region 3 encompasses Lucas Valley, Indian Valley, Pacheco Valle, Ignacio Valley, and Loma Verde Open space Preserves (OSPs). On first glance, the plan appeared to provide for connecting multiuse roads and trails for mountain bikers while continuing to limit many locally-popular footpaths to the walkers, joggers, and equestrians who currently use them. The public has 80 days to submit comments.

As the County acquired lands over the years to become Preserves, it inherited former ranch roads and paths, many of them "social trails" formed by neighborhood walkers with dogs, joggers, hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Some follow animal trails, and some were cut deliberately. None were designed for the extended recreational that they experience, nor are they necessarily safe for shared use in their existing condition. The County's process involves determining which of these "non-system" trails warrant being improved to meet County trail standards for single or shared use and which are redundant and/or should be decommissioned for environmental or safety reasons. The County has also pre-selected some trails that could be redesigned ("improved") to safely

accommodate multiuse including bikes.

MCL recently raised some red flags concerning the public process for approving new trail projects under the RTMP. MCL places the highest priority on protecting native vegetation and wildlife habitats, generally the reason these lands were acquired for the public. MCL also emphasizes the need for public transparency. Although the Parks Department sees its process as open and transparent, the public is still struggling to follow procedures in which new projects are proposed and considered for possible implementation,



*The Indian Valley
Open Space
Preserve is in
Region 3.*

Stuart Smith

and then evaluated for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), frequently after they have been scheduled for construction. MCL has raised this issue and hopes to see greater clarity and predictability in the future. MCL's two main criteria for suitable trail projects are that recreational development does not occur at the expense of resource protection, and that it ensures safe and comfortable recreational experience for all users. Because roughly three-fourths of users of the preserves are on foot but are not politically organized, MCL will continue to represent their interests in the politically-charged RTMP process that is shaping a trail system for future generations.

Going for Deep Green

By Doug Wilson and Mary Morgan

"The single most effective way for Marin residents to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to switch to Deep Green."

Those lines were written almost a year ago in this Newsletter on the eve of the County's adoption of its updated Climate Action Plan (CAP), and they continue to be true. And yet, only about two percent of Marin customers of Marin Clean Energy have taken the easy step to sign up for MCE's 100 percent renewable Deep Green option, a step that would cost them about \$5.00 additional per month and eliminate over a ton of GHG pollution a year, the equivalent of roughly 15 full tanks of gas.

What is "Deep Green," and how might it help Marin residents to meet the county's goal of 60 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2020? This article revisits Marin Clean Energy and its Deep Green energy option, describing its renewable energy benefits and recent progress, and encourages readers (customers) to sign up for it.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) and MCE

Marin was the first county in California to establish a community choice aggregation (CCA) program under AB 117 legislation passed in 2002. MCE is a public agency overseen by a board of elected local officials and owned by its ratepayers. Since establishment in 2010, it has expanded to serve more than 175,000 residents and businesses in Napa County and the Cities of Richmond, Benicia, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Walnut Creek and Lafayette. Following in MCE's footsteps, other CCA programs are launching across the state of California with the objective of increasing renewable energy supply and fostering energy efficiency. Pursuant to the CCA enabling legislation, all electricity customers within MCE's service area are automatically enrolled in MCE. Those wishing to stay

with PG&E are required to affirmatively opt out. MCE is responsible for procuring power while PG&E remains responsible for delivery of power to customers' homes or businesses, for infrastructure maintenance, and for billing.

Groundbreaking ceremony for the Marin Clean Energy Solar One Project, a 49-acre, 10.5 MW ground mount solar farm on a Chevron Richmond refinery brownfield site. Pre-development costs are covered in part by MCE Deep Green customers.



Photo courtesy Marin Clean Energy

Light Green—Deep Green explained

From the outset, MCE has offered 50 percent ("Light Green") and 100 percent ("Deep Green") renewable energy options. Most MCE customers were originally enrolled in the "Light Green" energy program. The Light Green program provides at least 50 percent renewable energy from sources such as solar, wind, bioenergy, geothermal and small hydropower. As an alternative, customers may upgrade to the "Deep Green" program, which is 100 percent renewable energy currently consisting of solar and wind. Biogas may be added to the Deep Green mix next year. A "Local Sol" option in the future will procure 100 percent solar power at guaranteed rates from local solar projects.

Since customers all receive power

through a central electric grid, an individual's purchase of green energy does not necessarily mean he or she is buying electrons directly from a known renewable source. Rather, the individual's purchase through MCE causes that amount of renewable energy to be added to the grid, displacing an equivalent demand for fossil fuel-based energy.

In 2014, the renewable clean energy purchased for the Deep Green program comprised 100 percent wind power from Kern County and the state of Washington. In 2015 the mix comprised about 25 percent solar from California and 75 percent wind from California, Idaho and Washington. In 2016 about 25 percent biogas will be included. Wind power for MCE's Deep Green comes partly from the newly built Mojave Rising Tree wind farm, an installation of newer, larger, slower-rotating turbines that

Continued on page 9

Deep Green *from page 8*

greatly reduce bird strikes associated with older wind farms.

Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), often criticized, are being phased out by MCE as new sources of renewable energy become available. A REC is created when one megawatt-hour of renewable energy is generated and added to the grid. As the US EPA describes it, "The REC product conveys the attributes and benefits of the renewable electricity, not the electricity itself." A REC can be purchased 'bundled' together with the corresponding electrons or 'unbundled' which represents the green attribute of the power but without the corresponding electrons. Many unbundled RECs bought in California correspond to power produced out of state. As in-state generation has grown, MCE has reduced its unbundled REC purchases from 30 percent of its energy supply in 2014 to 15 percent in 2015 and has set a policy limit of 3 percent of its energy supply for 2016 through 2024.

Signing up for Deep Green.

Efficiencies due largely to its expanding customer base have allowed MCE to reduce its Light Green rate by about 9 percent. As of September 1, the average Light Green customer will pay \$93.81 per month for 50 percent renewable power. The average PG&E customer will pay \$94.27 for 30 percent renewable power. Deep Green customers will pay \$98.44 for 100 percent renewable power. PG&E's own 'Solar Choice' 100 percent renewable power program will cost the average customer \$110.86 per month.

Signing up for Deep Green helps to support the development of new, local renewable energy projects. One half of the additional cost of Deep Green goes into a development fund currently being used for the first MCE-owned project, Solar One, a 10.5 megawatt solar project planned to be operating in Richmond, CA, by 2017. MCE has at least seven

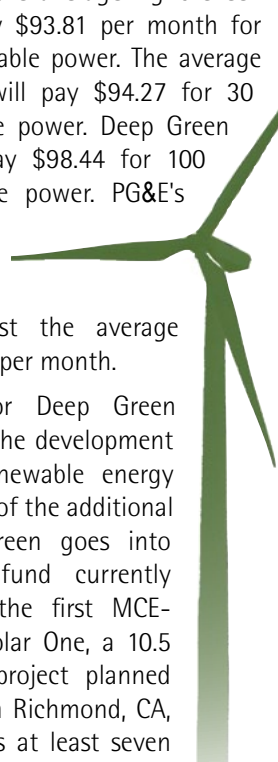
additional local renewable projects either online or under construction, including rooftop solar systems at the San Rafael Airport and the Buck Institute for Research in Aging, and ground mount solar installations at the Novato Cooley Quarry, Richmond Parkway, and Redwood Landfill. MCE has plans for 30.5 megawatts within its service area, and that will likely continue to grow, since MCE prefers locally sourced power.

Now is a good time to revisit Deep Green as a personal option. mcecleanenergy.org/dg-enroll.

Deep Green can complement individual rooftop solar installations. Customers whose solar roofs may not be able to meet all of their energy needs may choose to buy 100 percent renewable to cover their needs. Rooftop solar tends to be a more expensive option than Deep Green, since it usually requires an upfront investment. Once solar is installed, however, MCE pays above the full retail rate for any excess energy generated through its Net Energy Metering program. Deep Green is an easy and low-cost option for people who rent or can't afford solar, or whose rooftop is not suitable for solar.

Why has only slightly more than two percent of MCE's entire customer base thus far chosen to shift to Deep Green? In MCE's early years, uncertainties about its future made some hesitate to sign up for Deep Green. Now that MCE has proved itself to be a robust and competitive provider of clean energy, caution may have been replaced by simple inertia! Since the urgency of climate change is only growing, now is a good time to revisit Deep Green as a personal option.

mcecleanenergy.org/dg-enroll.



Waste *from page 1*

California pioneered the 1969 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, which established the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and significantly influenced amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948, known today as the Clean Water Act.

Recently, the Clean Water Act has been given new focus. Last April, the SWRCB adopted stringent new trash reduction requirements, prohibiting letting trash 5 mm or greater (smaller than a pencil eraser) into waterways. Municipalities will soon be required to adopt one of two approaches to comply. A "full trash capture approach" will require installing trash capture devices everywhere runoff flows into stormwater systems in order to filter all discharge before it flows into waterways. Installation and maintenance of these devices will be costly.

A second, more flexible option, a "full trash capture *equivalency* approach," will require a combination of installing trash capture devices in high trash generation areas and strategies to reduce trash and litter at lower generation areas to achieve the same ends as a "full trash capture approach."

Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPPP) is taking the lead in helping East Marin comply with the new regulation. MCSTOPPP, with its North Bay counterparts, is developing an integrated framework for the "equivalency" approach. It will provide guidance to towns and cities, protocols for monitoring, and assistance in applying for grants. To be successful, local governments will need a toolbox full of litter reduction strategies, including addressing big picture problems, like homelessness and illegal dumping, as well as reduction efforts by local citizens.

Controlling waste upstream and midstream

Single-use disposable bag bans and producer take-back programs are some of the most effective strategies for reducing

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waste at its upstream source. November's ballot will include **Proposition 67**, a statewide single-use **plastic bag ban**, endorsed by environmental organizations throughout California, including MCL. Many cities and towns in Marin already have plastic bag ban ordinances. In 2014, SB270, the statewide plastic bag ban, was signed into law. Subsequently, plastic bag manufacturers qualified a referendum requiring the law to go before voters before it takes effect. **Vote Yes on Proposition 67** to make sure the ban takes effect statewide, once and for all.

In addition to installing trash capture devices, "equivalency" strategies will incorporate increased street sweeping, enforcement of tarps and secured truck loads, reduction and recycling of solid waste by "zero waste" programs, resource recovery by sanitation services, and provision of adequate receptacles at multi-family housing, office, and commercial buildings. In a recent effort, San Rafael's Streets Team and volunteers retrieved more than 2,000,000 cigarette butts and sent them to Terracycle, a company that up-cycles the plastic-containing butts by turning them into industrial products. In April, San Rafael City Council amended its municipal code restricting smoking in all public spaces, an effort to make downtown San Rafael 100% smoke-free (and butt-free!).

Local watershed groups have long hosted regular creek clean-ups, some on Coastal Cleanup Day, which this year falls on Saturday, September 17. Clean Mill Valley's new "*Adopt A Spot*" program encourages residents to commit to clean-ups of a street, block, or spot, year-round. **Marin Clean Highways** (MCH) of Mill Valley, has taken a multi-pronged approach to reducing trash along Highway 101. In June, MCH coordinated a "*Tarp your Load*" event, handing out donated tarps and educating truck drivers on state law. They also raised funds to pay San Rafael's Streets Team to clean litter from Mill Valley frontage roads and successfully encouraged the McDonald's in Strawberry to make strides in reducing its packaging from ending up



Left—A mother sea otter tries to rescue her pup from a plastic bag in California.

Below—Trash accumulation at the CalTrans Park and Ride lot on Smith Ranch Road.

photo by Terry McCormac, 2011, courtesy Clean Water Action

in nearby Belloch Lagoon tidal marsh.

To receive credit under the "equivalency" approach, however, cities will have to prove that efforts like these are effective in achieving the State's litter reduction requirement.

Downstream—assessment and cleanup of our ocean

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently studying marine debris including macro- and micro-plastics, the viability of removing them from oceans, and their toxicological risks to human health. The EPA is identifying the specific sources of plastics in the marine environment and is collaborating efforts to reduce them. The organization All One Ocean has installed permanent beach cleanup stations, around the Bay and beyond, resulting in more than a million pieces of trash being collected by the public.

Marin Clean coalition

*Are approaches that rely on personal actions and technology adequate and effective in the face of wide spread pollution of the marine environment? In 2015, **MarinLink** formed Marin Clean, "a coalition of environmental organizations*



Dru Parker

that collaborate, advocate, and promote with other entities for a litter-free Marin." Through individual member efforts (some described above) and collective leadership, Marin Clean is demonstrating what can be achieved with persistence and commitment to a range of strategies. Marin Clean coalition meets the first Wednesday of each month.

You Can Help:

Tell others and **Vote YES on Prop 67— statewide Plastic Bag Ban.**

Participate in creek clean-ups, Adopt-a-Spots, and **Coastal Cleanup Day** on September 17. (See Upcoming Events, [Page 6](#)).

Attend a **Marin Clean** coalition meeting, contact locustmv@pacbell.net.

Senate Bill 3205

Wilderness and mountain bikes

By Nona Dennis

On July 13, Republican Senators, Orrin Hatch and Mike Lee of Utah, introduced legislation—S. 3205, the “Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Act”—that could open lands protected under the 1964 Wilderness Act to mountain bikes and possible other mechanical devices. Similar legislation introduced in 2015 failed after more than 115 conservation groups urged legislators to reject any effort to introduce machines to wilderness areas: “The “benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness would be forever lost by allowing mechanized transport in these areas.”

Four federal agencies—the Forest Service, National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—administer about 110 million acres of wilderness designated by Congress. The clash between mountain bikes and the Wilderness Act began as the first produced mountain bikes were just becoming popular. In 1984 the Forest Service adopted a regulation prohibiting bikes from its wilderness areas. It hinged on a provision in Section 4(b) of the Act: “... there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, *no other form of mechanical transport* and no structure or installation within any [wilderness] area” (emphasis added). What “mechanical transport” does or does not allow makes this one of the most debated sections in this 50-year old foundational law in U.S. land preservation.

Does “mechanical transport” include bicycles?

What does the term “mechanical transport” mean? The Wilderness Act did not define the term or even mention bicycles. The Forest Service, after initially permitting bike use, in 1984 reinterpreted “mechanical transport” and prohibited

“possessing or using a ... bicycle” in a designated wilderness area. The other agencies followed suit. Last year, bike advocacy groups, including Marin’s Access4Bikes, formed the Sustainable Trails Coalition with the intent of breaking the ban.

Most conservation organizations unilaterally oppose S. 3205. Even mountain bikers cannot ignore the dismal environmental voting records of the two bill authors, who would also support opening wilderness areas to commercial exploitation were it possible. Notably, the

works to limit boundaries of *proposed* new wilderness areas so as to protect bike access to favored trails. In response to the legislation, however, IMBA stated that it “will continue to respect the Wilderness Act and the prohibition of bicycles in *existing* wilderness areas” (emphasis added).

Why protect Wilderness from mechanized travel?

For over 50 years the Wilderness Act has protected wilderness areas designated by Congress from mechanization and mechanical transport, even if no motors were involved. In response to the 2015

legislation, The Wilderness Society wrote: “At a time when wilderness and wildlife are under increasing pressures from increasing populations, growing mechanization, and a changing climate, the addition of “all human-powered (mechanized) travel” would effectively prioritize recreation over all other



Jason Crotty

bill would not amend the Wilderness Act. Rather, it would require the agency officials to determine what forms of recreation by non-motorized transportation methods would be permissible over routes within their wilderness jurisdiction. In addition to mountain bikes, this could open access to other mechanical, albeit human-powered, forms of recreation such as paragliders, kite skiers, or kite boarders.

Not all mountain bikers support the proposed legislation. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) found that its members were roughly split down the middle. IMBA aggressively promotes bike access on all public lands. By partnering with the responsible agencies, IMBA also

wilderness values such as protecting clean air and drinking water, habitat for critical wildlife, and opportunities for solitude, to name a few.”

A recent blogger concurred: “As both hiker/backpacker and mountain biker, I am conflicted about opening up trails in Wilderness areas to bikes. I don’t think of Wilderness as being set aside for humans as the primary user but rather as a way of setting aside large expanses of unspoiled landscape that can support habitat and ecosystems.”

MCL agrees: Bikes have no place in wilderness!

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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 POS:

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.

Editor: Nona Dennis

Design and Production: Dru Parker.

Printed in San Rafael on recycled paper.

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NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

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