



## December 2013

It has been quite a year here in Marin County. The range of issues discussed and deliberated has run the gamut from pension reform to Plan Bay Area, flood prevention to stream protection, workforce housing to homelessness, congestion relief to commute alternatives.

While not every issue is “of issue” to every person and not every problem resolved or addressed to the satisfaction of all, even the most cynical, I suspect, would agree that the dialogue and ultimate decision is improved when the broader public is engaged in the discussion.

It is my experience, that for each and every issue, the range of opinions and levels of passion run from one end of the spectrum to the other. We live in a very diverse community, at least when it comes to viewpoints. And while that diversity of perspective and opinion can make it tough for decision makers, the fact that folks step up and express their views demonstrates to me that people are paying attention, care about this community and its future, and are willing to be part of the discussion around decisions that affect the broader community.

I have learned a lot over the course of this past year, much of it from those of you who have taken the time to share and discuss your viewpoints. I am constantly impressed by the level of interest and thoughtfulness of folks who live here; even more so, by your willingness to participate, to seek to understand other viewpoints, to keep an open mind.

As we close the book on 2013, I wanted to express my thanks for your support and engagement. I truly appreciate this community. I am proud to be a member of it. Please continue to reach out to me - let me know what you are thinking. I count on your input and value your opinions.

To contact me: by phone 415-473-7825 or email to [krice@marincounty.org](mailto:krice@marincounty.org).

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## **Winter Spare the Air – Thank You!**

2013 will go down in the record books as the driest on record. The unusual weather pattern this winter has also triggered a record number of “spare the air/no burn” days. For many of us, myself included, the wood burning stove or a crackling fireplace turns a cold winter night into a comforting and cozy evening at home. But there are serious health and environmental impacts directly related to wood burning - and they are exacerbated by certain weather conditions - hence the need to “spare the air.”

The nine counties that surround San Francisco Bay are home to almost seven million residents and an estimated 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves. So it should come as no surprise that wood burning produces about one-third of the particulate pollution on a typical winter night.

Spare the Air days have been with us since the 1990s, when the Bay Area Air Quality Management District began asking residents to voluntarily abstain from lighting a fire when poor air quality conditions are present. In recent years, increased knowledge about the health and environmental impacts of wood smoke has triggered even stricter air quality regulations and mandatory compliance.

Change takes time, and it has taken some time for the “spare the air” concept to become an accepted (even if begrudgingly) part of our culture. But, from my observations, the culture is changing and most in our community are respecting this important health and environmental rule. My thanks to all. By adhering to the no burn rule, we truly are making a positive difference for the health of our neighbors, the broader community and the environment.

To find out if a ***Winter Spare the Air Alert*** is in effect, residents and business owners can do the following:

- Call 1-877-4NO-BURN (1-877-466-2876)
- Sign up for automatic phone alerts by calling 1-800-430-1515
- Sign up to receive [email AirAlerts](#)
- Download the Spare the Air App for [iPhone](#) or [Android](#)
- Connect with Spare the Air on [Facebook, Twitter, or Google+](#)

## **Draft Road and Trail Management Plan Update**

Since its inception in 1972, the Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) in concert with community members and conservation groups intent on preventing development, protecting the environment and preserving public access to much loved community assets, has acquired and preserved nearly 16,000 acres of marshland, forests, creeks, and rolling hills in 34 preserves across Marin. These lands include over 200 miles of unpaved roads and trails that consist of former logging and ranch roads, fire roads that are shared use trails, narrow recreation trails and wildlife trails.

The purpose of the Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) is to provide a comprehensive document to guide the future use and management of all the roads and trails on Marin County Open Space lands.

The primary goals of the RTMP are:

- To establish and maintain a sustainable system of roads and trails
- To reduce the environmental impact of roads and trails on sensitive resources, habitats, riparian areas and special status plants and animal species
- To revise visitor use policies for roads and trails towards improving visitor experience

Both the Draft RTMP Plan and Draft Tiered Program Environmental Impact Report (TPEIR) were released on October 1 following two years of public workshops, resource assessment, documentation and associated environmental studies. December 2 marked the close of the 60 day review and comment period for the Draft TPEIR.

The District received several hundred written and oral comments on the Draft TPEIR, and is reviewing all comments towards preparing a written response for inclusion in the Final Draft. The Final Draft is expected to be released spring of 2014 and will include the final environmental report, the comments received during the public review period, the response to comments, as well as the mitigation monitoring and reporting program.

Following the release of both documents, MCOSD will hold two additional public meetings regarding both the Final Draft of the EIR and Final RTMP. The first will be a public meeting of the Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission, at which the commission will consider a recommendation to the MCOSD Board of Directors (Supervisors) to certify the Final Draft TPEIR and adopt the RTMP. The second will be a public meeting of the MCOSD Board of Directors at which time the Board will consider certification of the Final TPEIR and adoption of the RTMP.

In the interim, I will be working with District staff to arrange community meetings to discuss the plan and particulars related to various open space preserves in District 2. Our open space preserves are what define our communities. They serve as the backyard and playground for those who live near and many who come from afar. Their future use, preservation and protection are not only important for those of us who live here and use them today, but for generations going forward. I encourage you to learn more and be involved in this important community discussion.

For more information, visit [MCOSD's Road and Trail Management Plan website](#) and read the recent [Marin IJ article](#).

### **Interim Stream Conservation Area Ordinance Update**

On October 29, the Board of Supervisors approved an Interim Stream Conservation Area (SCA) Ordinance and Work Program to apply countywide for unincorporated areas outside the Coastal Zone. The ordinance was scheduled to take effect on December 28, 2013, and was to sunset in two years. However, implementation will not proceed due to

litigation filed on November 18 by the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN) and the Center for Biological Diversity. The Work Program, however, as approved by the Board on October 29, will proceed – and this is critically important, as the Work Program will help inform a permanent countywide ordinance for adoption at a later date.

Specifically, the Work Program is aimed at supporting property owner education, community engagement, and examining issues of concern around ephemeral streams. The work program calls for a study of SCA standards for ephemeral streams in the City-Centered Corridor and smaller lots in the Inland-Rural Corridor, it includes a watershed enhancement program comprised of education, homeowner assistance, permitting assistance, and funding mechanisms to support long term protection of sensitive habitat. And finally, the County stream map will be fine-tuned and updated. This entire process, anticipated to take between one and two years, will, I believe, ultimately create broader community support and improved compliance for creek, stream and watershed protections.

As many of you may know, I was unable to participate in the October 29 hearing and vote considering the adopted interim ordinance due to a recommendation by the State Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) per a potential conflict of interest (my home residence is within 500 ft. of a stream conservation area). That said, I want to let you know that I consider the interim ordinance as adopted to be significantly improved over the original draft ordinance. Specifically, the interim ordinance addresses many concerns expressed by property owners around the permitting process and cost – clarifying and simplifying the permitting process, reducing permit fees and providing clearer guidance on exemptions and best management practices.

For more information on the SCA ordinance including a Q&A, background reports and documents, visit the [Stream Conservation Area Ordinance website](#).

### **Hot Issues for spring 2014**

Over the course of the next several months, the Board of Supervisors will be discussing several important programs and policy matters that will be of interest to many in District and throughout the County.

- [The Open Space District Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan](#)
- [The Open Space District Road and Trail Management Plan](#) (see article above)
- [County Agricultural Department Invasive Weed Program Proposal](#)

I will be including updates on these programs and proposals with a focus on the more controversial elements of each in upcoming editions of this e-news. In the meantime, I encourage you to educate yourself by visiting the County website (click on links above), subscribe for updates, and stay involved in the public discussion via formal comment, participation in public meetings, or by contacting me at [krice@marincounty.org](mailto:krice@marincounty.org).

## **Community Development Agency Enhanced Customer Service**

Visitors to the County's Community Development Agency (CDA) are experiencing a big boost in customer service with a new walk-in service center, expansion of express permitting hours, and redesigned/expanded website among the upgrades.

On December 19, the agency launched a [revamped website](#) that features a variety of shortcuts for residents seeking services. It's easier to find forms, get answers about permits, learn about ordinances and find plans for major development projects. Residents may subscribe to pages and keep informed about development that may occur in their neighborhood through e-mailed notices from the County. Individual project pages include proposed plans and public notices. Not only is more information available about specific projects, but the website now allows residents to find zoning information about their properties. For those considering their own projects, planning policies and regulations are easier to find and download. For help navigating the new website, feel free to contact my aide, Sandy Laird, at [slaird@marincounty.org](mailto:slaird@marincounty.org).

In addition, the Building and Safety, Planning and Land Development programs recently opened a new Development Services Center on the third floor of the Marin County Civic Center Administration Building. The center, located one door down from the CDA offices in a renovated Suite 308, is the centerpiece of a master plan that fosters more efficiency for residents navigating the permitting and/or planning process and needing personal assistance. The new lobby features an open, inviting space with design elements that respect the architectural heritage of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Civic Center, a registered National Historic Landmark. The renovation was undertaken as part of the County's long-term facilities plan to modernize the Civic Center and provide for better customer service to the community.

## **December/January Local Events**

### ***Nature Walk at King Mountain***

Saturday, December 28, 9 - 11am

Meet at the gate at the end of Ridgecrest Rd in Kentfield

Take a 2 mile easy to moderate trek through your local forest and connect to its natural wonders with Ranger Ian McLorg. Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes, and bring water and snacks. We request that no pets (except service animals) attend. This is a rain or shine event but high winds will cancel. Questions: contact Ranger Ian McLorg at 415-473-2816 or [IMcLorg@marincounty.org](mailto:IMcLorg@marincounty.org).

### ***Loma Alta, Old Railroad Grade (for ages 15 and up)***

Wednesday, January 8, 10am – 1pm

Meet at the trailhead at the end of Glen Dr in Fairfax

Enjoy a slow stroll along the old railroad grade, a route that takes us in and out of a series of forested valleys separated by open grassland and coastal scrub habitats. We will employ a car shuttle so we can have a relaxing morning walk. Bring a lunch. We request that no pets (except service animals) attend. If questionable weather, call (415) 893-9527 on the morning of the walk for a recorded message to see if the walk is

cancelled. Questions: contact Shannon Burke at 415-893-9520 or [SBurke@marincounty.org](mailto:SBurke@marincounty.org).

***Evening on the Hoo-Koo-E-Koo Trail***

Saturday, January 11, 3:30 – 6pm

Meet at the gate at the end of Crown Rd in Kent Woodlands (off Evergreen Dr.)

Take a late afternoon/evening hike (approx. 3 miles round trip) with a ranger on the Hoo-Koo-E-Koo Trail above Baltimore Canyon to learn about some of the plants and animals that call the area home, as well as the history of the foothills of Mt Tamalpais.

Dress in layers, wear sturdy shoes and bring water and snacks. Friendly dogs are welcome, but must be leashed. Rain does not cancel this event. Questions: contact Ranger Michael Warner at 415- 473-2816 or [MWarner@marincounty.org](mailto:MWarner@marincounty.org).

***Creekside Restoration with Save The Bay***

Saturday, January 18, 9am – noon

Hal Brown Park at Creekside, Bon Air Road, Greenbrae

Join Marin County Parks and Save The Bay staff to learn about the history of San Francisco Bay and Creekside Marsh before helping to plant native plants, pull weeds, and spread mulch. This project involves a moderate level of activity and is suitable for all ages. Pre-registration is required. To register, or for more information, visit [www.savesfbay.org](http://www.savesfbay.org).

[Click here](#) for more information on any of these events and others.

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