

May–June 2016

Seashore ranch planning continues

by Judy Teichman and Nona Dennis

In recent weeks, many stories about the ranches on Point Reyes National Seashore ("Seashore," or "Park") have appeared in a variety of media, prompted by a recent lawsuit against the Park management. Each story has brought a somewhat different perspective, raised questions, and added to the public's confusion. MCL described the Seashore's Ranch Comprehensive Management Planning process in its *Newsletter* of January–February 2015. That process has been delayed, but continues. A review of the background may be helpful.

Background

In November 2012, in response to speculation that allowing Drakes Bay Oyster Farm's permit to expire was the first step toward phasing out the ranches on the Seashore, then Interior Secretary Ken Salazar directed the National Park Service (NPS) "to pursue extending permits for the ranchers within [the] pastoral lands to 20-year terms." He observed, "[t]hese working ranches are a vibrant and compatible part of the Point Reyes National Seashore, and both now and in the future represent an important contribution to the Point Reyes' superlative natural and cultural resources." The ranches have been

Focus on Marin wildlife



Marin Wildlife Picture Index Project

A coyote pup takes a selfie for the Marin Wildlife Picture Index Project.

by Nona Dennis

"It must be a coyote—it has longer legs than a gray fox, and a different snout and tail." A volunteer is peering at the images on her large computer screen. The identity of the animal is not immediately apparent as (unlike the easily recognizable coyote puppy captured above) the photo is only partially in view and the night-mode

image is gray and a bit fuzzy.

This is one of three rapid-fire images that the motion and infrared-activated camera has captured of the animal. As long as the coyote lingers, the camera will continue to take photos in bursts of three. The viewer scrolls through images on the screen, confirming the

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operating under a variety of short-term leases for many years.

NPS Director Jon Jarvis followed up in January 2013 by delegating authority to grant leases/permits for up to 20-year terms to the Regional Director for the NPS Western Region "to provide greater certainty for the ranches" and demonstrate support of the NPS for the "continued presence" of the ranching

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A Message from the President—Succession

A story

occurs in a setting—a place and time; and setting plays an important role in character development as well as in plot.



Similarly, the natural and cultural landscapes of where we live contribute to how we live, and have much to do with our future. As Harm de Blij says, they "shape what we become, both individually and collectively".

But places, like nature, evolve, as do the organizations, agencies, and people who work to protect and preserve them.

As MCL continues in its 82nd year, we look back on a long history of change and succession in the organization. While MCL's mission has remained consistent

over time, how we achieve it continues to grow and evolve, due in part to changing environmental issues and in part to a changing Board of Directors. With a twenty-member working Board and no executive director, MCL's accomplishments and focus are very much the product of the skills, experience, and commitment of our Board members, along with the work of our committees, and the support of our members at large.

At the Annual Dinner in April, three long time Board members completed their terms. **Randy Greenberg** was valued, by both veteran Board members and newer ones alike, for her knowledge of the planning process and the balance and intelligent clarification she brought to discussions.

Past President **Jana Haehl** adeptly took the lead in many MCL responsibilities and offered me much appreciated encouragement as new President.

Larry Smith contributed decades of work to the MCL Board, served for many years as MCL Treasurer, and is past recipient of MCL's Marin Green Award for environmental leadership.

We thank each of them for their contributions, not only in shaping MCL, but also for their work in protecting and preserving the landscapes we love.

MCL's five new Board members—**David Lewis, Greg Zitney, Arlin Weinberger, Ralph Mihan, and Bob Miller**—come to us with a rich variety of experience and local history. We are excited to have them "on Board." You will learn more about them in upcoming Newsletters.

To our members, your continued participation and support are invaluable and always appreciated. Onward!

Editorial

Measure AA—regional thinking

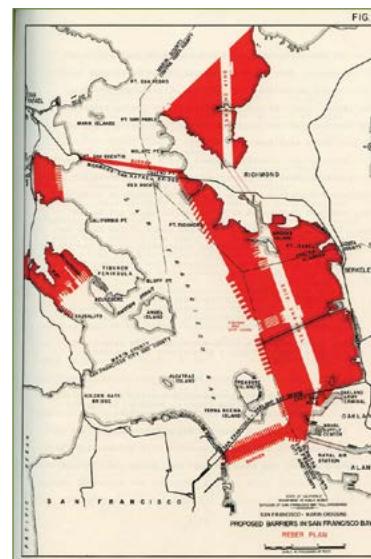
The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority proposes a \$12/parcel/year tax (Measure AA) on the June 2016 ballot that will generate \$500 million over 20 years "for restoration, enhancement, protection, and enjoyment of wetlands and wildlife habitat and protection from flooding in the San Francisco Bay and along its shoreline." Who can object to the worthy purpose and foresight of this measure? The Bay connects us all in uniquely satisfying and practical ways.

However, some voices in Marin are raising strident objections, suggesting that the Authority, which was formed by the state legislature in 2008, presents a "worrisome precedent" for regional governance and taxation without representation. Perhaps they are still mired in the recent experience of Plan Bay Area, which didn't sell well in Marin. This limited sense of history, however, is myopic and threatens to impede an opportunity for the Bay Region to continue

its long-standing record of environmental leadership. Look back a few more decades to three "regional" agencies that have shaped the environment and quality of life in the Bay Region.

Bay and wetlands. Fifty years ago, three dedicated women who saw San Francisco Bay rapidly disappearing under acres of fill and piles of trash initiated Save the Bay. Out of their efforts came the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) that brought to an abrupt halt the rampant filling of the Bay. BCDC is a state agency, but its purview is regional, and its commissioners represent a variety of public, private, and nonprofit sector interests. For five decades BCDC has protected the Bay (and its wetlands) that defines and unifies this region and in recent years has led the entire region in beginning to plan for sea level rise that will impact all who live here.

Air quality. In 1946, as the air in California



From Eric Fischer's Flickr Photostream: 'San Francisco Bay Area Freeway and Bridge Plans.'

Myriad plans to fill, dike and otherwise permanently alter the Bay abounded after World War II, such as the Reber Plan (above) which would have created large freshwater lakes by diking off the areas in red.

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Gary Giacomini—MCL's 2016 Peter Behr Lifetime Achievement Awardee

A lifetime of public service to the environment

One of the high points of Marin Conservation League's Annual Dinners is always the granting of awards for exceptional service to the environment of Marin County. Several different awards are given, but the Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors legendary conservationist and public servant Peter Behr, confers special recognition on an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to the environment with consistent purpose over a lifetime and in myriad ways.

At its Annual Dinner on April 29th, MCL bestowed the Peter Behr Award on retired Marin County Supervisor **Gary Giacomini**. While Gary and MCL did not always see eye to eye, those differences fade away against the larger backdrop of the lengthy list of actions taken by Gary over a lifetime for the benefit of Marin's environment and other significant lands in the United States.

Gary is probably best known for his two and a half decades of service on the Board of Supervisors. In his early years he worked on ways to help ranchers comply with the newly adopted Clean Water Act, and he was influential in establishing the minimum agricultural parcel size of 60 acres, a feat that was instrumental in preventing rampant development of West Marin.

He also worked with Phil and John Burton to include large swaths of land in the Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, along with making it possible for ranching to continue with long-term rights of use and occupancy. He chaired several iterations of the Countywide Planning Committee and served on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the California Coastal Commission, and the Golden Gate Bridge District Board, among others.

He did not stop serving the public after he left the Board of Supervisors and went into private law practice. He remained on the Coastal Commission for several years, and, as a founding member of MALT, he

continued on its Board. He was reappointed again in March of this year.

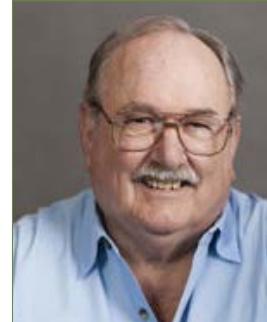
Among his achievements while in private practice, Gary helped George Lucas donate several thousand

acres to MALT and to the Marin Open Space District. He joined the Board of the American Land Conservancy, a national land preservation trust that has permanently protected tens of thousands of acres across the country, especially in California (including the Hearst Ranch), land along the Mississippi River and land in Alaska, including much of Kodiak, and he served as President of American Land Conservancy during the last several years. He also spent two 4-year terms as trustee of the Marin Community Foundation, whose earlier successful battle to remain in Marin was due in no small part to his efforts.

Less well known has been his work behind the scenes, providing strategic advice and encouragement to achieve environmental victories. He has helped both Marin Baylands Advocates and Marin Audubon Society in their campaigns to acquire important properties for wetland habitat and open space.

From any perspective, Gary's accomplishments can be measured in thousands of acres of land preserved and decades of service to the public. He is indeed a legend in the County. MCL was proud to honor him on April 29!

Due to press deadlines, photos from the 2016 Annual Dinner will appear on MCL's Facebook page in early May and in the next issue of the MCL Newsletter.



Gary Giacomini

Many thanks to Marin Conservation League's 2016 Annual Dinner Sponsors

Patron **Arlin Weinberger**

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Marin Municipal Water District

Ralph Mihan

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Friend

Anonymous

Jean Berensmeier

Marin Sanitary Service

Vicki Nichols

Joan Thayer

Roger & Dee Roberts

Wildlife from page 1

identity of the animal as it moves about, unaware of the camera. The coyote soon wanders off, and the camera waits for the next movement within its range. The volunteer scrolls down through the next sets of photos and continues methodically to catalogue each image on an Excel spreadsheet.

I recently spent a few hours as a volunteer in order to learn more about the [Marin Wildlife Picture Index Project](#) (MWPIP). I identified photos of black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and a raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). Because this particular camera also was being activated by wind-blown grasses, I looked at many, many images of a green hillside in daylight (recording a "blank" on the spread sheet), with occasional views of hikers or mountain bikers (*Homo sapiens*) moving along a nearby fire road or coming close to examine the camera set-up.

The Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) lab in Corte Madera is quiet except for the soft clicking of a dozen "mouses" at computer stations as volunteers scroll expeditiously through hundreds of photos and identify each image. Thousands of images are being catalogued to be analyzed later for frequency of species, their location and activities, trends, and other information useful to the MWPIP. In that three-hour session alone over 9,000 images were catalogued. The "Cool Pic" of the day was a spotted skunk, a rarity in Marin County.

Learning about wildlife

The MWPIP is a project of the [Tamalpais Lands Collaborative](#) (TLC, or "One Tam"), a partnership of MMWD, Marin County Parks, California State Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (MCL Newsletters [March-April 2014](#), [January-February 2015](#)). The project combines a statistical analysis of photos from cameras with other environmental data to help land managers learn about the abundance, patterns, and trends in wildlife use and behavior on their lands. The Wildlife Picture Index (WPI) technique



Both of Marin's wild cat species, the mountain lion (left) and the bobcat (below) have been captured by the MWPIP's motion-activated cameras, which do not emit light or disturb the animals.

was developed by the Wildlife Conservation Society of London and is used internationally. Here in California, the protocol was first used in Sonoma County at the Pepperwood Preserve with success. In Marin, about 120 weatherproof motion-activated cameras have been installed in a regular grid pattern across the Lagunitas Creek watershed on lands managed by County Parks, MMWD, State Parks (Samuel P. Taylor), and GGNRA on Bolinas Ridge. The cameras are located by Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) to ensure non-biased sampling but at the same time represent different habitats. The cameras do not emit light or use a flash and, therefore, capture images without disturbing wildlife. They are mounted securely on stakes or on trees and operate on rechargeable batteries and record photographs onto memory cards that are collected and downloaded into computers for cataloguing. Since they were first installed in September 2014, the cameras on MMWD and Marin Open Space Preserves, alone, have produced over 1,564,000 photos.

Servicing the project

Although the cameras may be automatic, servicing the project is not! It requires hundreds of hours from trained volunteers in the field and in the laboratory. The cameras require servicing every four to six weeks to make sure they are in place and working and to replace batteries and memory cards. The job requires navigating cross-



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country, often in rough, heavily vegetated terrain, to locate cameras. At least a dozen cameras have been vandalized or simply stolen. Many more hours are required in the lab to identify and enter the images into a database. Photos are catalogued months after they were taken. Cataloguing events such as the one I attended are led by One Tam staff and hosted by partnering agencies and their staff, as available. In 2015 alone, volunteers catalogued 253,266 images. Regular training sessions are held for volunteers to learn animal identification and basic computer technique and how to enter data.

The cameras are best at detecting mid-sized mammals like raccoons, foxes, squirrels, although they capture other wildlife as well. The images have revealed at least 16 different species of mammal. By far the most common mammals have been black-tailed deer, followed in numbers by grey squirrel. Also catalogued, in descending order of frequency, are small rodents (not identified to species), raccoon,

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Wildlife from page 4

grey fox, wood-rat, coyote, brush rabbit, bobcat, black-tailed jackrabbit, Sonoma chipmunk, striped skunk, and opossum. River otters and Western spotted skunk are rarities. One mountain lion, known as "Blinky" due to an apparent eye injury, has been recorded in several locations. Birds are another matter, however. Only turkeys can be positively identified; other birds are either too small to trigger the camera or are not identifiable. A few lizards were photographed on Giacomini Preserve, but generally reptiles and amphibians have escaped detection.

Value to land managers

Marin's public land managers have done an exemplary job inventorying the County's plant communities and rare plant species to inform land managers. Unfortunately, comparable information on wildlife has been lacking, due largely to the labor intensive and costly challenges of collecting data. The WPI project provides this information with a methodology that has been refined over time and is now recognized for its ability to collect reliable and accurate statistical data across many levels of the food chain on a landscape scale.

Using MWPIP data, Marin's land managers will be able to establish baseline population figures, identify wildlife "hotspots" and crucial corridors for movement, and begin to assess trends in populations. The goal is to understand wildlife populations well enough to identify what healthy populations look like, identify early signals of distress, and avoid population declines. Although to date, the project has focused on the Lagunitas Creek watershed on the northern side of Mt. Tamalpais, in 2016, cameras will be added in and around the Redwood Creek watershed to provide information on mammals on the southern side of the mountain. Additional information can be found at onetam.org and marincountyparks.org.

Measure AA from page 2

became more polluted, the Legislature enacted the first air pollution control law authorizing the formation of county air pollution control districts. As it became evident that air pollution overflowed political boundaries, the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District (later Air Quality Management District) was established in 1955 as the first regional air pollution control agency in the nation. The District's first years were fraught with controversy over attempts to ban open burning at dumps and wrecking yards. Every year the District has advanced regulations that have cleansed the air and saved lives. The Board of Directors consists of 24 locally elected representatives from 9 Bay Area counties based on population. Marin has only one representative whereas Santa Clara County (for example) has two.

Water quality. The California State Water Resources Control Board was established in 1967, along with nine Regional Boards. The San Francisco Bay Water Board covers



the nine Bay Area Counties that make up our "Basin." The Board has broad authority to develop water quality objectives and enforce regulations. It has been hugely successful in protecting the many uses of water by Bay Area industry, agriculture, municipalities, and the environment—a never ending challenge. The seven members of the Board are appointed by the governor, with approval by the Senate. There is no local representation.

Imagine what the Bay Area might have been like had they not existed! The actions of these historic "regional" agencies have made a profound difference in the Bay Region's environment and quality of life. Governance and representation obviously vary from one agency to another, but each of them, supported by our taxes, has been

dedicated to a shared mission of improving the environmental health of the Bay Region, and thereby its economy, to everyone's benefit.

Given this history, how does Measure AA present a "worrisome precedent"? Sound decisions to restore the bay must be based on the best available scientific information, not on political power. That is what Measure AA promises. \$12 per year, \$1.00 per month, is a minuscule amount to pay for the benefits that will accrue to all of us.

—Nona Dennis, Editor

Correction and clarification:

The MCL [March-April 2016 Newsletter](#) concerning Measure AA incorrectly stated that Marin would receive nine percent of funding from the measure, or about \$45 million over 20 years. To correct and clarify: One half of net revenue (estimated at \$250 million) would be divided among the regions on the basis of population. Of this amount, nine percent would go to the North Bay, with four percent going to Marin (about \$10 million). The other half of the net revenue from the measure would be available on a grant basis. Over 20 years, grants would be distributed based on the merit of proposals and not on population. Thus, although Marin is guaranteed four percent, funding from the flexible 50 percent of revenue could add any amount.

It is important to understand, however, that strategies for addressing flooding from sea level rise cannot be limited by arbitrary county boundaries, but rather must be considered in their regional context. For Marin, that means collaborating on problems, solutions, and benefits with other North Bay Counties with related hydrologic and physiographic conditions. For example, restoration of former San Pablo Bay wetlands in various locations will benefit all counties who share that shoreline, regardless of how much each contributes in the way of parcel tax.

—Editor

Events

Walk reveals Mt. Tam's invisible West Peak

For MCL's 19th Walk into (Conservation) History on April 16, three dozen or so participants enjoyed a brisk hike up the Mt. Top Trail for a spectacular tour of the West Peak of Mt. Tamalpais. For many, it was the first time they had entered the abandoned military base that holds so many stories of the 30-year era of the Cold War.

The site affords clear views across the watershed and lakes to Tomales Bay and the Pacific on one side, and San Francisco Bay and its urban expanse and distant mountains on the other. Gary Yost, unofficial historian of the base, led the tour of the structural remains of the radar operations base that at its height employed as many as 300 personnel, the majority of them housed with their families atop the mountain.

Along the trail and at the top, Marin Municipal Water District Ranger Matt Cerkel recounted some history of the water district—including the

debt that Marin owes to William Kent for contributing much of the land for water supply and conservation—and the challenges that MMWD faces in managing a changing landscape (See also Bill Hogan retires, page 10).

West Peak offers a new challenge and opportunity to restore a severely altered landscape to a semblance of its former natural condition. The MMWD Board is moving forward with a feasibility study to consider how this might be done, and at what cost.



photos by Sharon Farrell, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy



Gary Yost (left) and Matt Cerkel, MMWD Ranger (above) describe Cold War-era air defense radar station on West Peak.

Senior Walks to continue into summer

MCL's Senior Walks, open-space excursions designed especially for senior citizens and funded by a County of Marin Measure A grant, will continue into the summer.

The Walks are free and transportation, water and snacks are provided.

Pre-registration is required. Call Shannon at 415-485-6257 or email mcl@marinconservationleague.org for details and to reserve a seat on the shuttle, which will take passengers from several Marin locations in the morning.

Tuesday, May 3
Roy's Redwoods

Friday, June 10
Old St. Hilary's

Wednesday, July 13
Stafford Lake Park



Greg Zitney



Top—An interpretive map shows the route of the Hamilton Wetlands Bay Trail (dashed white line).

Left—Participants view the marsh at the March 24 Senior Walk at the Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project.

Climate change planning update

Marin County has been aware of its extreme vulnerability to rising sea levels for a number of years. According to recent reports, Marin ranks second among the nine Bay Area counties for projected risk of impacts from flooding and storms attributable to sea level rise (SLR), with potential losses estimated at \$8.5 billion worth of buildings and their contents on the bay shoreline. MCL has been closely tracking progress by the County toward the eventual goal of developing a coordinated, county-wide plan for adaptation to SLR. In the meantime, this Newsletter has reported on a series of programs and actions in the County moving toward that goal.

In early 2012, Will Travis, retired Executive Director of [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission](#) (BCDC) outlined for an MCL audience the efforts by BCDC over half a dozen years to bring sea level rise into the consciousness of local jurisdictions, commerce, and industry surrounding the Bay. Established by the legislature in 1965 in response to rapid filling of the Bay, BCDC ironically has been carrying a message forward that contrasts with its earlier charge: the concern now is rising Bay water levels rather than losses of Bay shoreline due to filling. Several hundred miles of shoreline are now vulnerable to flooding from SLR that has been estimated variously to reach between 16 inches at mid-century and 55-inches by 2100. ([MCL Newsletter March-April 2012](#))

Marin began serious investigations into its vulnerable assets on the Bay shoreline—homes, highways, small businesses, schools, communications networks, wetland habitats, at risk—with a pilot study along the Richardson Bay shoreline in Southern Marin in 2013, led by Supervisor Kate Sears. That project also explored potential adaptive strategies and their impact on the people who would be most affected and how best to communicate critical technical information to the public. ([MCL Newsletter January–February 2014](#))



Dru Parker

The BayWAVE Assessment identifies many categories of assets vulnerable to sea level rise, including infrastructure such as the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District's treatment plant, left.

Important lessons from that study were useful in organizing a broader study on the Pacific Ocean Coast of Marin. ([MCL Newsletter November–December 2015](#)) The C-SMART (Collaboration: Sea-level Marin Adaptation Response Team) got underway in 2014 and was scheduled to run through April 2016. As with the Southern Marin project, C-SMART also began with an assessment of properties, services, transportation, farmlands, recreation, utilities, etc., vulnerable not only to rising sea levels but also to more intense storms, extreme waves, and other shoreline hazards like land failure. Working in collaboration with many partner agencies and technical consultants, that study began with a more sophisticated approach to future flooding scenarios, taking into account a range of sea level rise amounts (from 10 inches, to 20 inches, to just under 40 inches), sources of flooding (tide levels, waves, currents), and frequency of storm events (annual, 20-year, 100-year). Out of 40 possible scenarios modeled by USGS's Our Coast Our Future (OCOF—an interactive on-line tool), the study selected five "hazard" scenarios for testing the vulnerability of affected communities like Muir Beach, Stinson Beach, Bolinas, and others. Adaptive strategies included every possibility, from retreat and relocate, to elevating structures, and/or constructing levees and seawalls and installing pumps. Public outreach by

the County's Community Development Agency, with Principal Planner Jack Liebster leading, was highly effective. Workshops were widely attended by property owners concerned about their own vulnerability.

Marin's BayWAVE Assessment

To complement the C-SMART program, the County turned back to East Marin last year and, with funding from the County and the Coastal Conservancy, initiated [Marin BayWAVE](#) (Bay Waterfront Adaptation Vulnerability Evaluation) to assess vulnerability along the Bay shoreline from the northern end of Novato to the Golden Gate Bridge. ([MCL Newsletter November–December 2015](#)) The 18-month program is directed by Senior Planner Chris Choo in the County Department of Public Works, working with engineer Roger Leventhal, and is currently underway. A draft report is due in July. MCL Water and Watershed Committee and Climate Action working Group have both received recent progress updates from Choo and Leventhal.

According to Choo, the BayWAVE program shares similarities with C-SMART but is necessarily different. It is based on the same OCOF models and similar scenarios (six rather than five) for identifying and mapping hazards of inundation. As with

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Climate *from page 7*

C-SMART, categories of assets were identified as potentially vulnerable, but given the extent and complexity of urban development along the Bay, these are far more numerous than types of assets on the coast. Another major difference is the number of towns/cities and special districts that touch the Bay compared to the coast. The program must break up assets by community and at the same time use consistent data across the entire shoreline. Choo said that 204 entities that manage assets, as diverse as a small property owner (not including individual homeowners), a motel, CalTrans or PG&E, must be engaged and interviewed in the study. The study is also engaging those communities, like Ross, San Anselmo and Fairfax, that do not touch the Bay but whose connections would be severely impacted by tidal flooding. By engaging all twelve cities, towns and County in three governing committees (Executive, Policy, and Technical [staff support]), the study is laying the groundwork for future coordination in planning.

Choo cautions that this is just the first Phase—a planning tool—for longer-term adaptation planning. In conjunction with the vulnerability assessment, BayWAVE is developing an "Early Action Program." That includes an "adaptation tool-kit" showing both hard-engineered solutions, such as levees and flood walls, and soft-engineered solutions, such as horizontal vegetated levees and expanded tidal wetlands. Several small projects will be selected to demonstrate how these would work. The program will also include an Early Warning Strategy as part of Marin's Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan process. BayWAVE does not include either adaptation planning or a robust public outreach program. These will be in the next phase, and while the County will "be involved," it will not necessarily lead that effort.

MCL is looking forward to the release of a draft report on the vulnerability assessment in July and one or more public meetings. In the meantime, we will continue tracking a critical process that appears to be well directed by the County.

Ranch *from page 1*

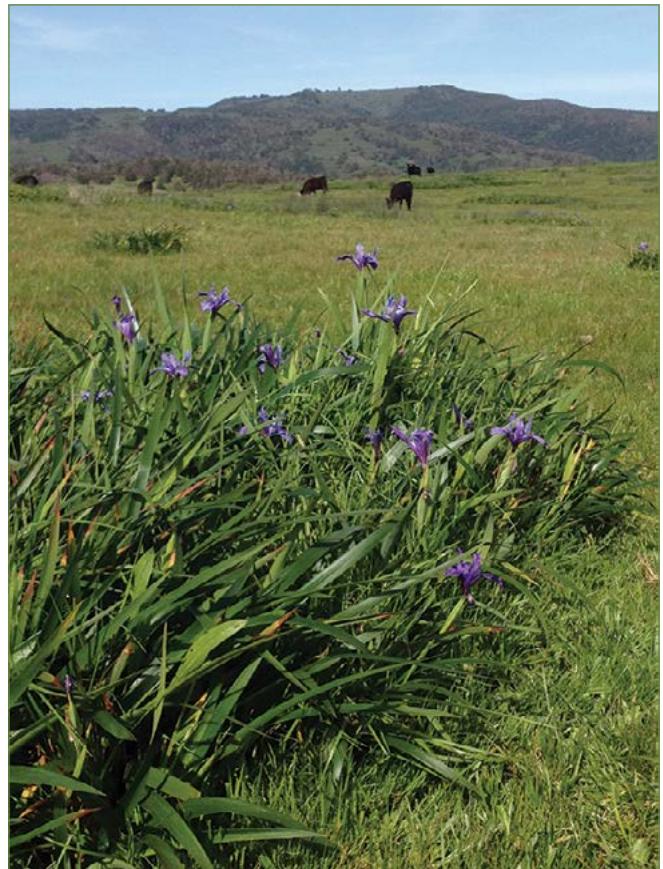
operations.

In early 2014 Seashore Superintendent Cicely Muldoon announced initiation of a Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan (RCMP) for the 17 beef cattle and dairy ranches that operate 24 leases across 18,000 acres of the Park. She said, "[f]or more than 50 years, ranchers and the park have been working together. This plan is an opportunity to build on that past, address current issues, and strengthen our shared stewardship of these lands. This plan will set a strong foundation for ranching now and into the future."

It was anticipated that the RCMP and its Environmental Assessment (EA), required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), would be completed by the end of 2015, but at this time, the date for release to the public has not been announced. Over the past two years, Seashore staff have had innumerable meetings with the ranchers and other interested parties in addition to holding public meetings in late 2014. MCL also held informational meetings in 2014 and has been committed to participating in the RCMP.

Law suit challenges the RCMP

In February of this year, three environmental groups, including one headquartered in Mill Valley, filed a lawsuit alleging that the NPS has violated a variety of federal laws by undertaking the RCMP without first updating the 1980 GMP for the lands managed by the Seashore and preparing an Environmental



Judy Teichman

Beef cattle graze at the Home Ranch with Mt. Wittenberg in the background.

Impact Statement. The complaint identified certain environmental issues. Several local environmental organizations, including the Marin Conservation League, Environmental Action Committee, Save our Seashore, and the National Parks Conservation Association made it clear that they would support the continuation of ranching on the Seashore and the Seashore's planning process. MCL expressed its support of the Ranch Planning process in the *Marin IJ* (February 26, 2016), the *Point Reyes Light* (March 3), and President Kate Powers was quoted similarly in *National Parks Traveler* online (March 20).

At the urging of the local agricultural community, including the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), on April 5 the Marin Board of Supervisors unanimously authorized Marin's County Counsel to seek to intervene as a defendant in the law suit, alongside

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NPS in support of the Seashore's planning process. The Board of Supervisor's decision to intervene was supported by Congressman Jared Huffman, to "[k]eep faith with the deal that the historic ranching and dairying families signed up for long ago, and certainly keep faith with what Congress has always intended."

Supervisors noted that Countywide Plan policy and programs have consistently supported agriculture and the County's commitment to its viability. "You need a critical mass of ranchers in Marin to have a viable industry." An editorial in the *Marin IJ* (April 10) supported the Board's decision, stating that the lawsuit was a premature legal attack, coming as it has at the outset of the Park's planning process, rather than after the draft plan is released. The Editorial went on to say that "the Plan should include plans to work with the ranchers to become models for environmentally sustaining agriculture. Longer-term leases would help lay a strong foundation for improvements."

General Management Plan and the Ranch Plan

The central complaint in the lawsuit is that the Seashore has not updated its General Management Plan, and should do so. While few would debate that a 36 year-old GMP needs to be updated, delaying the development and implementation of the ranch management plan while updating the GMP would run counter to the overriding NPS obligation under the 1916 Organic Act—that parklands be administered "by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Since the Park announced an update of the GMP in 1999 and let it become inactive, the ranchers' reservations of use have expired, and most have been limited to leases of five years or less. With such short term leases and an uncertain future, the ranchers have not been able to finance capital maintenance projects, including some currently recognized environmental "best

management practices."

In the two years since work on the Ranch Plan began, the situation has become more difficult for ranchers due to conflicts with the growing elk herd and the ranchers' inability to reduce coyote bush that is taking over the pastures, thereby reducing the amount of forage available for ranching and dairy operations. In short, requiring an update of the GMP prior to completing and implementing the ranch management plan would jeopardize ranchers' ability to continue operations, let alone make improvements. Thus, there is an urgency to completing the Ranch Plan.



Judy Teichman

Given these requirements, the question of whether agriculture should continue in the Seashore's pastoral zone could be moot. No good or useful purpose would be served by delaying a ranch management plan that will enable the Seashore ranchers to make environmental and operational improvements with the assurance of longer-term leases.

Coastal Zone Management Act

At the April 5 Board of Supervisors meeting, Deputy County Counsel David Zaltsman noted that the federal Coastal Zone Management Act requires that federal activities in a coastal zone "shall be carried out in a manner which is consistent . . . with the policies of approved State management programs."

The priorities set out in California's Coastal Act (the State's "program") are consistent with the priorities set out in the NPS Organic Act in virtually all respects, e.g., they support recreational uses that are consistent with public safety and protection of natural resources from overuse; and they require protection of environmentally sensitive habitats, marine, archeological and paleontological resources. Although the legislation governing the Seashore specifically authorizes the NPS to continue to lease lands in the pastoral zone for agriculture, it does not require it. In contrast, the California Coastal Act specifies that all ". . . lands suitable for agricultural use shall not be converted to nonagricultural uses unless . . . continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible. . . ."

MCL plans public workshops

MCL has participated in the Seashore ranch planning process since 2013. We submitted scoping comments on the proposed ranch management planning process, held meetings, and reported on the Seashore's 2014 public meetings ([MCL Newsletter January–February 2015](#)). MCL will continue to support the Plan process by offering public workshops this Fall that are intended to increase understanding of ranching on the Seashore, as it is influenced by various NPS laws and policies, and its relation to the larger ranching community in Marin. The workshops will examine key issues that the Ranch Management Plan is likely to cover. The goal is to gain understanding of how economically viable agriculture using environmentally beneficial land management and conservation practices can best be achieved. Details for the timing and location of the workshops is forthcoming.

MMWD Chief Ranger Bill Hogan Retires

What can 38 years service on the MMWD Watershed tell us about the changing world of outdoor recreation in Marin's open spaces and wildlands? Bill Hogan, Chief Ranger of MMWD, retired in March after almost four decades with the District. During that time he saw visitors to Mt. Tamalpais roughly double to an estimated 1,600,000 in 2014. He has also seen a dramatic change in how people recreate in the out-of-doors. On Mt. Tam there is no "low" season!

These are among the observations between "then and now" that Bill offered on March 24 at the MCL Water and Watershed Speakers Series, based on his long experience on the 21,000 acres under MMWD jurisdiction. They could well apply to all public lands in Marin, which are experiencing similar explosive growth in recreational use.

MMWD's mission is to manage natural resources and provide high quality water, and to provide public safety and resource protection on its watershed. When Bill joined the public safety department in 1978, rangers were generalists—they did anything and everything. Now in 2016, rangers are specialists—unarmed peace officers responsible for law enforcement, fire protection, search and rescue, and emergency medical services. Who are the visitors they serve? Bill describes his observations as "unscientific" but consistent with known data from two surveys conducted in 1974 and 2013.

First, outdoor recreation has become both a popular lifestyle and big business. More than 140 million Americans demonstrate that outdoor recreation is a priority by spending \$646 billion annually on outdoor recreational activities. Outdoor recreation is now a "must have," carrying economic, social, and health benefits. For example, hikers and runners on Mt. Tam have increased from 39 to 70 percent of visitors between 1974 and 2013. Mountain bikers increased from two percent to 30 percent. Second, the surveys revealed that visitors from Marin had increased from 38

to 66 percent of total visitors. Compared to overall population growth between 1970 and 2010, during which the population of Marin increased by 18 percent and population of the Bay Area increased by 36 percent, visitation to Mt. Tam had approximately doubled.

Search results for "Mt. Tamalpais" and "Trails," "Watershed," "Waterfalls," or "Bike Rides" get tens of thousands of hits. Popular trails also take a hit; on a recent weekend, hikers passed a fixed point on Cataract Trail at the rate of 400 per hour!

Sunrise to Sunset

Public safety on MMWD lands is managed, sunrise to sunset, by five rangers, two armed deputy sheriffs, plus the Chief Ranger: in winter, 11 hours a day; in summer, 15 hours a day. On average, 3.2 staff are on duty at any given time. Their effective operating range is 129 square miles, encompassing Mt. Tam, Nicasio, and Soulajule locations. Staff does not have the "bandwidth" to patrol at night, when powerfully-lighted bicycles are known to ride District lands.

With limited man-power and the need to witness illegal actions to issue citations, rangers must "multiply force," that is, leverage their time. "Smart" technology has allowed rangers to apprehend graffiti taggers, for example. Rangers' trucks are armed with communications technology. Using reported evidence and known patterns of visitor behavior, they can focus patrol on "hot spots" or strategically investigate illegal activities such as marijuana "grows" or unauthorized trail construction. MMWD rangers also collaborate with the other agencies with jurisdiction on the mountain.

Bill Hogan, (front, center) and public safety staff.



Marin Municipal Water District

With experience comes wisdom

Although service calls for fire protection, search and rescue and medical service are infrequent they are quite critical. Wildfire is a naturally occurring event in our landscape, and Mt. Tam will burn again—hopefully on our terms. Visitors make inexplicable mistakes, and locating a 911 caller requiring search and rescue can be challenging. Marin County has excellent public safety services, but lands are remote and accidents can occur in difficult locations. For a visitor with a medical emergency, the care received from rangers and rapid transport can be life-saving.

Finally, Bill emphasized that judgment also directs a ranger's job. Enforcement of regulations alone is not THE solution for visitor conflicts. Often the best outcome comes from détente. Since there will never be "enough" staff per acre, not all regulations can be enforced. Some are easier to enforce than others; some are rarely enforced for good reason; and some are virtually unenforceable. Nonetheless, regulations are valuable as leverage to promote good behavior and discourage bad behavior. People's behavior is consistent, he observed; it can be unpleasant and irresponsible, and antisocial people don't stay at home! The bottom line: There is no substitute for a dedicated, well-trained and experienced ranger staff to provide public safety service in the remote undeveloped lands of Marin. Bill's audience wished him well in his retirement from a job well-served!

GGNRA dog management: final round?

GGNRA's Plan for managing dogs on trails and beaches is once again in the news, this time as a Proposed Rule. This is the last step in formalizing a Plan that has been under debate for many years. MCL first reported on the proposed Plan and its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the MCL *Newsletter for May-June 2011*. MCL studied the alternatives and concurred with the basic premise that dogs need to be restricted in many areas of the park for reasons not only of safety but to avoid damage to sensitive resources. As Park staff have pointed out, since 1979, when an "interim" Pet Policy was first adopted, visitor numbers have grown from an estimated 1.5 million to a current 18 million/year. The dog population, including commercial dog walking, has also grown, with the attendant problems of dog waste, visitor conflict, employee safety, and disturbance

to endangered wildlife and plant species that by law require special protection. The interim Policy was unique among national park units in that it allowed certain areas to be available for both on-leash and off-leash walking. However, it was necessary to bring Park rules into some consistency with National Park Service policy while still allowing appropriate access—in other words, to craft a compromise.

The Draft Plan presented alternatives with varying levels of restrictions, and MCL supported the "environmentally preferred" alternative. The Draft Plan disappeared for almost three years while GGNRA staff reviewed almost 5,000 comment letters. It reappeared in 2013, along with a Supplemental EIS that examined essentially the same alternatives but included a large recently acquired addition to the park

in San Mateo County. Once again, many comments were received, and the Plan again disappeared from public view.

At this time, the final 90-day round of public comment is underway before the Rule becomes final. Public meetings have been held, and comments are due by May 25. In Marin County, the Plan allows dogs on-leash in paved areas (only) of Stinson Beach; in the parking lot and on the main trail and beach area of Muir Beach; on Homestead Fire Road, Summit Trail and Homestead and Eagle Trails; on Oakwood Valley Trail, Alta, Orchard, Pacheco, and Rodeo Avenue Trails; on portions of the Coastal Trail, Old Bunker Road, Fort Cronkhite, and Lagoon Trails, and Batteries Loop Trail; in Rodeo Valley on portions of the Miwok and Rodeo Valley Trail and Coastal Trail; and in the Fort Baker area, on the parade ground, Fort Baker Bay Trail, and other short trails in the area. One area—Rodeo Beach—allows dogs off-leash under voice control. The Proposed Rule is generally consistent with the 2013 Plan.

Don't let this be your last issue!

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Many dog owners in Marin, especially in Southern Marin, have requested relief from the leash requirement on nearby trails. However, the whole of GGNRA covers more than 80,000 acres, 18,500 acres of which are managed by GGNRA and subject to the Rule. The park touches dozens of neighborhoods that no doubt would like their own exceptions to proposed management rule. In Marin, the restrictions are in line with those of other land management agencies—leashes are required on the MMWD watershed; State Parks does not permit dogs at all except in paved areas; and trails on County Open Space Preserves require leashes. Yet many miles of fire roads and old ranch roads on Open Space Preserves are open to dogs off leash.

MCL believes that the Proposed Rule represents a fair compromise for what is an extremely popular urban park that is challenged daily to leave its natural, cultural, and historic resources "unimpaired" for future generations, while still providing opportunities for multiple forms of recreation, including enjoying the companionship of dogs.

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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.

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"Slow" signs appear on MMWD roads and trails



Constanza Perry

MMWD Watershed Information Systems Analyst Nick Salcedo and a newly posted "Slow Zone" sign. The signs support the "Slow and Say Hello" campaign, a collaborative effort of Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Marin Horse Council, and MCL that seeks to educate all trail users on trail etiquette.