



MCL Coastal Cleanup Volunteers Bag 300

Pounds of Trash

Twenty-three energetic, environmentally committed people, including Supervisor Susan Adams and students from Marin Academy, showed up at the MCL office on September 20 to help with our two Coastal Cleanup projects: Mahon Creek in central San Rafael and the Jean and John Starkweather trail at Shoreline Trail. After signing in and a briefing on do's and don'ts while munching on snacks, everyone disbursed to the clean up sites. Two hours later, our volunteers had collected almost 300 pounds of litter, including recyclables, tires, building materials, insulation, and dozens of tennis and rubber balls. Thank you to all our volunteers, and we look forward to the 2009 event!



Volunteers and some of the garbage collected at Starkweather Trail - a morning well-spent!

Assemblymember Mark Leno to speak at MCL's Business Breakfast Nov. 20

**TOPIC: A View of the Environment Through a
Post-Election "Crystal Ball"**

Join the Marin Conservation League for breakfast on November 20 at San Rafael's Embassy Suites for a post-election "crystal ball" view of upcoming environmental issues from one of our popular state legislators, Assemblymember Mark Leno. This will be the last Business-Environment Breakfast in MCL's 2008 series, and it will address environmental topics the legislature will be focusing on in 2009. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to ask questions and provide your input directly to your elected official on environmental issues that are important to you and your community by reserving your space at this event today. Leno, who has authored and passed more solar and renewable energy legislation than any other lawmaker in Sacramento, has received Legislator of the Year awards from both Vote Solar and Friends of the Earth.

The breakfast begins at 7:30 AM and features a full breakfast buffet. Space is limited and this event will sell out early, so reserve your seat today. Pre-payment is required. For a reservation form, see page 5.



A Message From the President:

Stick-to-itiveness Pays Off at Giacomini Ranch



The hallmark of Marin Conservation League – and, indeed, most other environmental non-profits – has to be “stick-to-itiveness!” Land use conflicts and proposals can last for decades before they are finally resolved – or accomplished – and integrated into a community’s fabric, where they eventually become history. (See *Status Updates*, page five, for current examples).

Good things do eventually happen! Thus it was exciting to see the results of years of effort by a huge cast of characters, led by Point Reyes National Sea-

shore (PRNS), at the official breaching of levees for the Giacomini Wetland Restoration. Sunday, October 26, 2008 marked the official first day of tidal restoration to lands at the southern end of Tomales Bay that had been behind levees for more than 60 years and used for agriculture. event was commemorated with walks and talks and refreshments for all – a celebration for the marine, estuarine, and freshwater species that will move back into their rightful habitat, and a ‘thank you’ for the many people, agencies, and organizations who helped make the restoration happen.

It was of more than academic interest to go back almost 15 years into MCL’s records – to February 22, 1994 – and find the carefully studied position the Board

had taken on the National Park Services proposal for the Giacomini Ranch. To the Advisory Commission, MCL wrote: “MCL has a long history of defending both wetlands and agriculture. . . .The Giacomini Ranch is unique in possessing the extraordinary values of both wetlands and agriculture that MCL is dedicated to protect. . . .” MCL went on to recommend that the ranch should be acquired by the federal government, and on termination of agricultural uses, become part of a long-term restoration to wetlands. Now, 15 years later, Marin can finally enjoy the results of so many peoples’ stick-to-itiveness at Tomales Bay!



IN THIS ISSUE

MCL NEEDS YOUR HELP!

To celebrate our 75th Anniversary next year, we are looking for photos, stories and mementoes of Marin’s “natural assets.” We are particularly in need of photos of Marin’s lands, open spaces and habitats taken at any time in the past 100 years, and accompanying narratives. Call 415-485-6257 for more information.

2009 Will Mark 75 Years of MCL's Environmental Activism - And a Look Toward the Future

Angel Island's "Founder's Grove" to be Replanted

It may be early to ask you to "Save the Date" for Marin Conservation League's 75th Anniversary Gala Dinner on April 17, 2009, but it's not too early to begin planning for MCL's Diamond Jubilee year. It will be a year to commemorate MCL's past achievements that helped to shape the Marin we know; to celebrate MCL's current vitality and venerable reputation as it continues its mission; and to plan for our role in a changing world in the next twenty-five years.

How did MCL celebrate previous special anniversary years? In 1974, four big-leaf maple trees were planted on Angel Island above Ayala Cove - "Founders Grove" - to honor the vision of the four founding women on MCL's 40th anniversary, in particular the efforts of Caroline Livermore for whom Mt. Livermore is named.

For the 50th Anniversary, MCL published a booklet about its history - "Marin's Natural Assets: An Historic Look at Marin County." Written largely by the late Nancy Wise, and produced by MCL staff and volunteers, it is an engaging story of the founders, their foresight and political "coming of age," and their successes in saving many of the public open space lands that define Marin County. It is also a chronicle of ongoing environmental activism in Marin.

The 60th Anniversary was celebrated in 1994 by a performance of "Mice and Poles," another inimitable musical satire by former County Counsel Doug Maloney, with a cast of dozens of well-known local "pols" and environmental activists.

How do we celebrate Year 75?—in part by taking direction from past

anniversaries. Several projects are underway, targeted for completion in 2009.

When we last visited "Founders' Grove" on Angel Island, before the October 12, 2008, fire, it had become the victim of neglect in 35 years. Obscured by thistle, blackberry, and eucalyptus trees, a small sign bearing the title "Marin Conservation League Founders' Grove" is the only indication of the remnant "grove." One of the original four maples has survived. MCL's plan to relocate and replant the grove down-slope from the original location has the full support of the State Park staff and the Angel Island Association. Fortunately the fire did not reach the northerly side of the island. A new interpretive sign will identify the new "Grove" and tell the story of how Caroline Livermore and her three colleagues rescued Angel Island from public auction and initiated the series of actions through which it became a state park with history preserved.

Almost twenty-five years of MCL history have occurred since the fifty-year history was published in 1985. To undertake the task of re-writing and updating this important history of environmental stewardship, MCL has asked well-known Marin County historian and long-time MCL member, Barry Spitz, to work with us. The new tome will be featured at the Annual Dinner in April and published in mid-2009, complete with new text and illustrations. Barry is the author of several definitive histories of Marin County: *Mill Valley*; *Marin County*; *Marin County Parks and Open Space District*; *The Dipsea Race*; and others. He is also an avid



Local author Barry Spitz to write history of the League

runner and knows most of the county "by foot."

We do not plan to produce another two-act musical for the 75th but may present a brief reprise at the Annual Dinner. We are also updating an earlier slide show with a technologically improved photo essay that will capture contemporary impressions of the Marin landscapes that the founders had the foresight to set aside many years ago - Stinson Beach, Shell Beach, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Angel Island, to name only a few.

As plans and projects for Year 75 take shape, we will ask you for your support and sponsorship. Without devoted members and dedicated volunteers over the past decades, this special year and the 74 years that preceded it could not have happened.



Visible charring on the south side of Angel Island and Mount Livermore

Lynn Eichinger

An Historic Footnote to the Angel Island Fire

The recent fire that blackened more than half of Angel Island held a particular poignancy for Marin Conservation League. As people from all over the Bay area watched the glow of flames climbing the slopes of Mt. Livermore during the night of October 12, we could only imagine what Caroline Livermore herself might have thought had she been alive.

Old-timers in MCL will remember the critical role that she and the other founders of the League played in saving Angel Island from another kind of destruction - that of private development. Paraphrased from the history

of Marin Conservation League, published in 1985 on the League's 50th Anniversary:

Angel Island, whose remnants of Native American subsistence, Spanish exploration, wars, and immigration encampments date back to 1775, was declared surplus by the federal government in 1946. Caroline Livermore established an Angel Island Foundation to prevent the island from being auctioned for private development.

With help, she provided \$12,000 to pay for interim fire and police protection while dozens of proposals for a State Park, ranging from heavily commercial

development to leaving the island completely alone, were being debated.

One proposal suggested that an aerial tramway be built to the top of the island's mountain, which would then be trimmed off to provide a plateau for a restaurant complex!

Angel Island did become a State Park in 1954, and a Preliminary Master Plan was finally developed in 1968 and endorsed by MCL and other environmental organizations. Consistent with MCL's park criteria, no commercial enterprises were included.

Grace Wellman, former MCL president, remembers a remark by Caroline Livermore's son, Putnam: "Mom and I were on the ferry boat to Angel Island one day and we looked up and she said, 'You know Put, this is the most beautiful view in the world. And from that mountain view you can see everything - it's a complete view!'"

Some years later, that mountain was named after Caroline Livermore. If Caroline Livermore were alive today, would she observe, as we do, that every ecosystem needs renewal? The October 12th fire, while brutal in its immediate aftermath, accomplished what no one could have planned better.



A boat carries firefighters to Angel Island

Robert Watkins

Status Updates

What's happening with local environmental issues MCL is tracking

Redwood Landfill

When we last reported on the Redwood Landfill expansion, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had been certified after extensive hearings before the Marin County Planning Commission. MCL continued to press for strong and enforceable mitigation measures that could be incorporated into the Solid Waste Disposal permit as conditions. We were reasonably satisfied that these were included in amendments to the Final EIR. Although the EIR process is locally administered, the actual permitting of a landfill falls under the authority of the California Integrated Waste Management Board, a State agency. The Marin County Environmental Health Services acts as the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) for the State and is responsible for developing a draft permit based on the landfill owner-operator's application and EIR mitigation measures. The LEA is also responsible for enforcing the permit once granted.

It was therefore disappointing to attend the pro-forma public meeting held by Environmental Health Services on September 15 for the

ostensible purpose of soliciting public comment on the permit. However, there was no draft permit on which to comment, and no substantive answers to the public's questions were offered. Supervisor Judy Arnold intervened and requested that the draft permit be released to the public for comment at a second public meeting, scheduled for November 5. You can be sure that MCL will be there!

Lawson's Landing

The County is slowly coming closer to a resolution to this decades-old conflict. The Environmental Impact Report process is long past. During recent months, the Planning Commission held many hearings on the proposed Master Plan and finally

sent their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. More than 125 people, many of them Lawson's Landing campers from the Central Valley, crowded into the October 14 *Even with reductions, Lawson's will continue to be the largest RV campground on the Coast.*

BOS hearing. Basic issues continue to center on camping within wetland buffers (outlawed under the Local Coastal Plan); use of parked trailers as full-time residences (inconsistent with Coastal Commission policy); how soon to require installation of an engineered septic system to replace existing "cesspits" that are draining into groundwater and ultimately

Continued on Page 7



Tomales Bay Parade

© iStockphoto.com/Galen Leeds

Yes! I will attend the November 20 Marin Conservation League Business-Environment Breakfast with Assemblymember Mark Leno! My check for \$30 per person is enclosed. Number of guests: _____

Name(s): _____

Title and Company or Affiliation: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Mail to Marin Conservation League, 1623A Fifth Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901.

Due to the popularity of this event, pre-payment is required.

Gold Hill and San Pedro Ridge Invasive Species Removal Project Continues to Gain Support



A hiking path is nearly obscured by six-foot stands of invasive French Broom

Cheryl Douglas

contractors. The work is being carried out under the direction of MCL member Cheryl Douglas, landscape architect and specialist in the management of invasive plant species.

In September, MCL member Dick Sadler worked with United Markets to produce a full-page display on the program in the Marin IJ, using the photo below.

The challenge of any program to control broom is the unending dedication required. The flowers from one plant can produce hundreds of seeds, and the seed bank lasts decades. On-going donations are key. With more funding, we would like to expand our efforts into other areas in Marin. Continuation of this program beyond the upcoming season can be secured by donating to "MCL Invasive Species Removal Fund," c/o Marin Conservation League, 1623A Fifth Ave. San Rafael, CA 94901.

We are delighted to report that MCL's Invasive Species Removal Program received fresh injections of financial support this Fall from Dominican University, Trinity Community Church, the Pasarell family, the Dominican Black Canyon Neighborhood Association, and other local residents.

The program primarily targets French Broom, a highly flammable and aggressive foreign invader that swallows our native grasslands and even creeps into our forests. Removing its monoculture facilitates the return of native vegetation, yielding food and habitat for wildlife, and giving hikers the added benefits of revealed views and wider trails, some of which have been obscured for years by tall stands of broom.

The MCL-administered program began in 2004 with a generous grant from Scott Jones and the Jones-Smith Family Foundation, and their subsequent annual donations have been critical to the project's success. Working on Gold Hill and eastern San Pedro Ridge, the family's generosity in 2008 enabled us to monitor areas worked in previous

years, to perform follow-up work where needed, and to extend removal efforts into new sections.

The San Rafael Fire Department has been an enthusiastic partner in the effort, because of the severe fire threat existing in the wildland/urban interface. The current focus of their own WUI program includes lands behind Dominican University and in neighborhoods where invasive vegetation has crowded out much of the native flora, and removal is critically important to reduce local fire dangers. Support from the University, along with the Smith-Jones Foundation, and our new donors will enable us to continue fieldwork by the Marin Conservation Corps (now Conservation Corps North Bay) and other



Stuart Lirette

Christopher Gray, San Rafael Fire Chief; Cheryl Douglas, Landscape Architect and Vegetation Management Specialist; Nona Dennis, President of Marin Conservation League; Scott Jones, President, General Steamship Agencies and Founder of Invasive Species Removal Fund; Dick Sadler, Fund Solicitor

Meet Your MCL Board Members

Three of the 19 volunteers working to make a difference!



RON ALBERT, Sausalito, is an attorney in private practice. He has had numerous responsibilities in Sausalito civic affairs and in charitable organizations. Ron served as Mayor of Sausalito (2006), where he enabled Sausalito to join the Cities for Climate Protection. Earlier he chaired Sausalito's Planning

Commission and served as Board Member and pro bono legal counsel to Rotary Housing Corporation in building 32 units of affordable senior housing units in Sausalito. He has been involved in numerous other civic and charitable organizations, including the Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative, the Sierra Club's Marin Group, the San Francisco Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyer's Service Program, Bayside School Tutors, the Rotary Club of Sausalito, and the Sausalito Chamber of Commerce.

SUSAN STOMPE, Novato, a retired businesswoman, has been active in conservation and civic affairs for many years. She chairs the North Marin Unit of Marin Conservation League, is former president, and coordinates MCL's Coastal Cleanup Efforts. Susan has served Novato as mayor, councilmember, planning commissioner and co-chair of Novato Clean and Green Day.



She has also served on the boards of The Olompali People, Marin Baylands Advocates, League of Women Voters, Environmental Forum of Marin, Novato Human Needs Center, and Sierra Club/San Francisco Bay Chapter.



CHARLES BROUSSE, Greenbrae, is a playwright, theater critic, and civic activist. Charles serves as Marin Conservation League Board secretary and chair of the Organizational Development Committee. He has a long record of involvement in environmental organizations as well as theater and the arts. He is a founding artistic director of Theater

Artists of Marin and board member of Marin Arts Council. As a long-time member of the Sierra Club, he served on the National Task Force on Election Reform, S.F. Bay Chapter Population Committee, and Sierrans United for Population Stabilization (SUSPS). Charles has also been active in the Yosemite Association and California State Parks Association. Locally he has served on the San Rafael Task Forces for Downtown Redevelopment and San Rafael Citizens Vision Committee.

Status Updates, cont. from page 7

Bay; and the overriding need to manage and protect the unique and sensitive dune/wetland ecosystem over the long term. MCL believes that removing RVs from wetland buffers need not jeopardize the economic viability of this private facility. Even with reductions in overall use, Lawsons' Landing will continue to be the largest RV campground on the California Coast. The Board will continue its deliberations on November 18 at 1:30.

On the Horizon

After months of waiting, we are either in the process of reviewing or expect imminent release of Environmental Impact Reports for the proposed **Marin Municipal Water District Desalination Project**; a proposed "big-box" **Target** store on the East San Rafael shoreline; Redevelopment of **Firemans Fund**, Novato; a large **Indoor Sports Complex** adjacent to endangered species habitat on Las Gallinas Creek; and major widening of Highway 101 through **Sonoma-Marin Narrows**. Numerous other projects are in various stages of planning or environmental review. We will report on them as they become available to the public.

*You're
Invited to the
Marin Conservation
League's*

Annual Holiday Party!

*We are honored to have had your
support in 2008 and would like you thank
you by inviting you to join us on*

Friday, December 5th

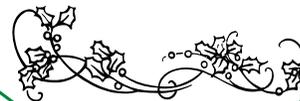
from 4:00 - 7:00 PM

*to usher in MCL's 75th year. The party will be
held in our historic Craftsman building at the
corner of 5th and F streets in San Rafael.*

*Call 415-485-6257 to RSVP, or email
mcl@marinconservationleague.org.*

*The party is our treat and we will be
collecting donations of non-perishable
food for the Marin Community*

Food Bank,



Marin Conservation League

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Board of Directors meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM at 1623A Fifth Ave., San Rafael, and are open to all members.

Dru Parker, Operations Manager
Jessica Leah Grace, Operations Administrator

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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.

Monthly Committee Meeting Schedule (subject to change):
Land Use: 1st Wednesday of the month. 8:00 - 10:00 AM
Parks & Open Space: 2nd Thursday of the month 3:00 - 5:00 PM
Creeks, Watersheds, Wetlands: 4th Thursday of the month 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Transportation and North Marin Unit: Call 415-485-6257
All meetings are at 1623A Fifth Avenue, San Rafael (Fifth at F)

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Marin Conservation League

NEWS

November - December 2008

Non-Profit Organization
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Renew Your Membership for 2009

Your continuing support helps MCL shape public policy and provide community education on issues of critical importance to our environment. It also ensures that the vision of the League's founders - to protect and enhance the County's natural resources through careful planning and appropriate development - will be maintained. If you have already sent in your membership renewal, **THANK YOU**, and please consider passing this newsletter on to a friend who may be interested in joining the League.

Yes! I want to protect Marin's environment by joining the Marin Conservation League!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please renew my membership for 2009 at this level:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Basic | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Oaks & Woodlands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Creeks & Streams | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Mountains & Ridges |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Baylands & Watersheds | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Peter Behr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional contribution \$ |

Mail to MCL, 1623A Fifth Ave., San Rafael, CA 94901.

All contributions and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.