



Tamalpais Guardian

Guardian of the Mountain since 1912

Tamalpais Conservation Club

Fall 2012

Volume 96 No. 2

President's message:

Taking Responsibility for Our Parks

For over 100 years, the TCC has given countless hours of labor, money and material toward the protection and preservation of Mt. Tam, its slopes and spurs. Recent events call out more than ever before of the need for grassroots organizations like ours, to play a more active role in our local parks' welfare in partnership with local management. Our organization is a stellar example of ongoing public involvement in our parks thanks to its many dedicated members for over a century. It is in that spirit that we move forward.

My previous message discussed initial plans for a fund-raising music festival to help preserve and protect Mt. Tamalpais State Park (MTSP). At that time things were still quite fluid. Well, a lot has transpired since then. We view this as an opportunity for the TCC to play a much more active role in Mt. Tam S.P. affairs. It is both an opportunity for the TCC to grow and stay active, vibrant and connected to the public in the 21st century while continuing to meet our core mission as Guardian of the Mountain.

"Mt. Tam Jam" Next June

Our event is now named the Mt. Tam Jam. We have acquired the website, tamjam.org and in the coming months will be working on its development. The festival is now officially scheduled for Saturday, June 22, 2013 in the Sidney B. Cushing Memorial Amphitheater, the Mountain Theater. We are aiming for a sell-out crowd of 3,750, the maximum allowable.

A New Event For This Year

We had been considering a festival this September as a way to recognize our centennial. As you see that has all changed. However, we do have a fun event for you at this year's semi-annual meeting at the Mountain Theater on Saturday, October 6. Please read membership secretary Danielle Duran's article on our Tam-a-Thon. Dani is enthusiastically taking the lead on this event and doing a terrific job in cooperation with the park.

As you are probably aware, there is an ongoing investigation as to how and why the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) was sitting on millions of unused dollars. (See page 4 story.)

While this scandal is shaking things up it does not alter our plans
(continued on page 3)

Hike, Bike, & Hoof for Mt. Tam

To mark the TCC's centennial anniversary, we will be celebrating our mission of protection and preservation by bringing the community together to do just that. By raising funds to ensure maintenance work on trails is completed, we will be contributing to another century of healthy usage. Our commitment of funds has been critical to the recent reopening of trails and we want to continue this impact, but need your help!

Please join us on **Saturday, October 6** for our first TAM-THON! We are limiting participation to the first 100 registrants, each of whom will be responsible for raising \$100 in pledges from their supporters. You can ask friends, colleagues and family to pledge per mile or for your whole hike. You are welcome to raise far more than the minimum and we are hoping you do!

We will meet at the Mountain Theater where you will choose your hike (four to six miles) from several options. Snacks and a raffle will await your return. Extra raffle tickets will be granted to participants who help make this event most successful - including those who raise the most money, who bring the most additional participants and who garner additional public support.

Because we are a community of Tam supporters, our TAM-THON welcomes hikers, bikers and equestrians to participate. We will be ensuring separate trails wherever possible; if you have particular special needs please let us know.

To be added to a list of prospective attendees and receive further information and/or to volunteer to help on the day, please email danielle@tamalpais.org We will also be posting information on our website www.tamalpais.org.

**Come to our Semi-Annual Meeting!
Saturday, October 6 at Noon
at the Mountain Theater**

Our meeting will coincide with our fundraising Tam-a-Thon.
Please consider joining a morning hike.
See article above.

We Need Your Email Address!

Please Complete Our Online Survey

In an effort to decrease our paper usage, postal costs and to increase communication of relevant information and activity we have decided to begin sending our newsletter via email and posting The Guardian to our website as well.

A survey to collect email addresses and gather additional opinions and thoughts is now posted on our website. The survey is less than twenty questions and allows you to share your opinions on topics ranging from the priorities of the organization to our semi-annual meetings.

Because we would like to discuss the results of the survey at our October 6 meeting, we ask that you complete the survey by October 1 so that we can have time to compile the results. You can reach the survey from a link on our website www.tamalpais.org, or if you prefer, you can send an email to TCC@tamalpais.org and ask that the link be sent directly to you. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your thoughts.

- Dani Duran

Open Space Tax Measure on November Ballot

The Marin Board of Supervisors has unanimously approved a quarter-cent sales tax measure placing it on the November 6 ballot to raise \$10 million a year for a variety of programs including vegetation management of parks, open space maintenance, land acquisition and rural farm preservation programs.

Unlike similar attempts in the past, this time the tax proposal enjoys the wide support of a diverse coalition of conservation, recreation and farming interests. Recent surveys suggest the two-thirds vote needed for approval is within reach. The program would provide as follows:

- 20% or \$2 million for farm preservation. The purpose of this program is to protect county farmland from subdivision and development and to preserve Marin's working ranches.

- 15% or \$1.5 million for city parks and recreation districts. This program assists local municipalities and special districts in managing their parks, open space preserves, recreation programs, and vegetation to promote biodiversity and reduce wildfire risk

- 65% or \$6.5 million to Open Space to maintain, protect and restore natural resources. 20% of this total goes toward purchasing land and conservation easements for permanent protection when and where willing sellers can be found.

The measure will have a ten-year life. Should the tax measure pass, it will go into effect April 1, 2013. The TCC supports this measure and in particular its value in protecting, maintaining and preserving our unique heritage here in Marin County.

- Larry Minikes

TAMALPAIS CONSERVATION CLUB FINANCIAL STATEMENT May 1, 2011 - April 30, 2012

Submitted by Perry Cole, Treasurer

RECEIPTS FROM OPERATIONS - 2012

Dividends & Interest	\$12,255
Dues - Renewal, New, Life	\$1,570
Donations: all types	\$2,012
Sale of Merchandise	\$25
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$15,862

EXPENSES FOR OPERATIONS - 2012

Bank Service Charge	\$156
Computer: Hardwr/Softwr/Service	\$1,755
Donations from TCC	\$5,500
Dues & Subscriptions	\$625
Insurance	\$3,285
Licenses & Taxes	\$271
Office Expenses	\$561
Printing & Reproduction	\$20,716
Postage	\$1,261
Program expenses	\$208
Reimbursed expenses	\$365
Rent	\$7,676
Telephone	\$899
Travel/Conference	\$75
Uncategorized expenses	\$185
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$43,537

OPERATING NET GAIN/LOSS **-\$27,675**

TOTAL ASSETS ON APRIL 30, 2012

Endowment Fund	\$473,208
Money Market Fund	\$9,136
Union Bank Checking	\$1,963
Market Value	\$27,675
Plus Income (see above)	\$15,862
Less Expenses (see above)	- \$43,537
Fixed and Other Assets	\$314
TOTAL ASSETS	\$484,621

Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2011

Expenses (\$27,700) exceeded receipts (\$15,700) for FY 2011 for a net loss of \$12,000. The losses were partly due to drafting and printing costs of the book "To Save a Mountain; The 100-Year Battle for Mt. Tamalpais", written by Barry Spitz. The book is available at area book stores.

TCC also donated monies to support our core causes for Tam. The MTIA received \$500 for the Earth Day event, and the Marin Open Space Trust received \$5,000 toward \$100,000 needed the purchase of the Manzanita Fire Road/Trail to the Spiral Circle.

Since moving our office to the Marin Art & Garden Center in Ross, there has been a considerable savings in rent costs. I look forward to a fiscally sound year for 2012.

*- Perry Cole
Treasurer*

Taking Responsibility *(continued from page 1)*

as the need is still as critical as ever as there is over \$1.3 billion in unfunded restoration and maintenance work due to many years of deep budget cuts. The lesson learned not just in Marin but also throughout the State; it is up to us as citizens to take a greater role in responsibility of our local state parks.

Since this is the first time out, we want to be especially certain that we are moving forward correctly. A festival of this type has a lot 'moving pieces' and we want to be certain we get it right. For example, we have been consulting with our attorneys to make sure we are meeting our fiduciary responsibility on every level. We can state with confidence that while the Club has not done an event like this before, our board is comfortable with the fact that we are staying true to our mission and properly meeting our responsibilities to the Club and to you as our members.

Event Fund Raising

A number of potential sponsors plan their giving campaigns many months in advance. One reason we moved the event is to give more time and energy to our fund raising efforts, which starts in earnest this Fall. It is difficult to make predictions at this point but we are aiming to raise adequate funds to underwrite most if not all of the cost of production and are working very hard toward this goal. In the meantime, we are informally looking for feedback from potential sponsors and participants. This is what is sometimes called the "thirty-second elevator pitch."

We are explaining to potential sponsors that a festival on Mt. Tam is truly a historic event at a time when our State Parks are in need of committed participation from the public if they are to be preserved and protected for future generations. When we explain we are producing a festival at 2000' on Mt. Tam on the Summer Solstice weekend, it instantly excites the imagination. When we describe the vision for the festival, early indicators are that we are going to be able to gather a lot of community support even in light of the recent news. People get that it is still critically important for the public to step up to save our state parks.

Our Goals

On the upside we hope to raise enough money next year to hire at least one additional enforcement ranger and one trail and maintenance ranger/worker. Our first year goal to raise between \$60k - \$100k. The cost for a ranger, not including state benefits and training is \$55,000/year. A maintenance worker costs \$45,000/year. There is also another \$10,000 worth of priority equipment local parks staff has identified that we are going to try to fund.

Assuming we are able to exceed these goals, there is still so much more we can do to fund additional MTSP positions. This will also help our other local state parks as MTSP rangers will be better able to handle emergency calls and coverage when required. It would also mean other park rangers will be less likely to be pulled from their duties to help out at MTSP.

Our rangers and our district managers are key in protecting the integrity of our parks. They need all the support we can give

them right now. The concern we heard is if we raise this money, will it simply go into the Parks general fund. The answer is no. The State allows organizations and individuals to donate funds for specific purposes and to specific parks so these funds will be specifically targeted to where they will do the most good on Mt. Tam.

Music Producer Hired

Since our previous newsletter we have accomplished much. Recognizing the risks involved in producing an event on this scale, our plan required finding an executive producer with deep music experience. We brought in Michael Nash of Mill Valley to fill that role. Michael has over 30 years of production and music experience. Among his accomplishments, the City of San Francisco hired him to design what is now known as the Outside Lands Festival, which is one of the City's largest festival productions. Michael shares a love for Mt. Tam and is very dedicated to making this a long-term success.

Michael is currently working on lining up well-known local "heritage" artists asking them to donate their time and talents to the festival. This is in process now and we should have our line up begin to come together within the coming weeks. We are fortunate to have so many well-known artists living in Marin and the Bay Area.

Battle of the Bands

We also plan to host a "Battle of the Bands" for our local high and middle schools. This will serve to get as much community involvement as possible. The event will be held at a local music venue to give our young musicians that authentic feel of competition. We will enlist professional musicians as the judges. The winning bands will have the privilege to open the festival. It is very exciting and we think the schools are going to love it!

In addition to the food and beverage booths at the event, we are inviting other local land management agencies and conservation and environmental organizations to participate. We should have several interesting information kiosks at the festival. This festival will reach a new group of folks giving us an opportunity at outreach and education in conservation and land management.

Our organization has remained relatively stagnant in terms of membership growth for at least the past decade while our current membership continues to get older. For many years, our board would discuss ways to grow our membership and bring in the next generation of members and leaders. We see this as a unique opportunity to maintain our Club's vitality and health while doing good for our parks and open spaces and appreciate your support with this important endeavor.

**- Larry Minikes
President**

State Parks Scandal

Much is in the news recently with a very upsetting State Parks scandal you may have read about. In essence, from what is reported to date, several members of senior staff were aware of \$54 million sitting in two reserve accounts for more than 10 years while keeping this information hidden from the public and the legislature.

This comes as a shock to many across the state who have been working tirelessly to save their local state parks from closure this year. Many citizens who have been working on saving their parks are outraged and rightly so. Marin's Assemblyman Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, chair of the Assembly's Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife, stated in a recent interview with the Pacific Sun that "It's disgusting, there's no other way to characterize it. We need to get to the bottom of this and clean house."

On July 20, the director of 12 years, Ruth Coleman resigned and her second in command was fired. The following week two more high level employees departed. Several investigations have been launched and we believe this is just the tip of the iceberg based on our own direct experiences with Sacramento DPR management. We meet with great skepticism the director's claim she only learned about these funds two weeks prior. There are several simultaneous investigations being conducted at this time including criminal investigations.

We had hoped for this change in top management for many years. From the knowledge we have gained over the years in our dealings with top DPR staff, sadly this scandal comes as no surprise and, in fact, was anticipated based on what we generally perceived as an ongoing pattern of deceptive, bad faith practices and lack of integrity. Huffman stated in a recent press release; "I've repeatedly expressed my concern about the lack of transparency and the fortress mentality at State Parks."

Based on our observations, before and after our successful 2002-04 lawsuit, DPR has given us every reason not to trust them. As you may recall, we successfully sued DPR early in the last decade to prevent parts of the Dipsea Trail to be open to mountain bicycling, among other related issues.

In our guardianship role, we consistently work in close partnership with our local State Parks District management, the rangers and the maintenance staff. We remain deeply appreciative of their efforts, cooperation and commitment to our parks and to the public good. Do not confuse these good people with the nonsense that went on at headquarters as in direct contrast, we found DPR executive management to exist in a cloistered atmosphere practicing a them vs. us attitude. After the scandal broke, we voiced our concerns and experiences to Assemblymember Jared Huffman and to the Attorney General's office.

A "Future of State Parks" meeting was held at the JCC last November 15 with Assemblyman Jared Huffman as chair, and Marin Community Foundation President & CEO Thomas Peters, the Marin Open Parks Coalition along with representative from State Parks, GGNRA and other land managers in attendance. As president, I spoke out strongly with our concerns

regarding the proposed closure of 70 parks and the secrecy that was involved in the planning process. Unanticipated was the raucous applause this received from the audience.

There was and still is no public documentation on how these decisions were made, nor was anyone at DPR willing to discuss the subject. At that time, on behalf of our organization and the public, we requested an investigation and an opening of the veil of secrecy that has surrounded DPR for so many years. Understand that the majority of the 70 parks slated for closure were on the North Coast extending up from Marin including many of our most beloved and special parks. Contrast this to south of Bakersfield where only 16 parks extending to the boarder were slated for closure.

As recently as 2011, much to our surprise, DPR proposed an expensive, poorly planned, unnecessary and environmentally destructive "multi-use" trail project to convert Bill's Trail adjacent to Lagunitas Creek in S.P. Taylor SP. In an effort spearheaded by the Marin Conservation League, for which we are eternally grateful, we pointedly asked why this project was being proposed in such an environmentally sensitive area at a time when we were trying to figure out how to keep our parks open. We wanted to know, given the financial state of affairs, how they could possibly afford to produce an expensive EIR and propose a trail that would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to build.

We might now have that answer; secret funding may have been in the plan! At least that is our best estimate. In hindsight, we now wish we had done more to ask for an investigation as to the source of these funds but even with the distrust we had toward top management, had not imagined a scandal of this magnitude.

This leads us to believe that knowledge of the recently discovered \$54M may very well have been known to several members of top staff. This is what is beginning to filter into news reports. It lacks credibility to expect the public to believe only a couple of people were aware of these funds for an entire decade or more. Viewing from the outside it appeared that within DPR these so-called reserve accounts were known to more than just a few top senior members. The current multiple ongoing investigations should sort this out in the coming months.

However, \$54 million is a proverbial drop in the bucket compared to what is really needed. State Parks is closer to \$1.3 billion in the hole in deferred maintenance. \$54 million, even if all used to keep our parks in operation, hardly gets our parks out of the woods and is only a temporary reprieve. In many instances, including Marin, our parks are woefully below what would normally be considered skeleton staffing. In other words, they are falling into serious disrepair after many years of back-to-back cuts in financing and staff. The deferred maintenance costs only increase with time and lack of attention.

We currently have two full-time rangers for Mt. Tam and two temporary. They sometimes get pulled to work in other parks during staff vacations or days when they are short-staffed. In comparison, when MTSP was working with minimal staffing ten years ago there were six full-time rangers. This was considered the bare minimum required to manage the Park. Consider that

today GGNR and Point Reyes National Seashore have around two dozen rangers each; this begins to give a sense of how great the deficit is. Keep in mind that our parks operate all seven days per week and should have at least two full-time shifts on each day plus days off.

Many casual visitors think of rangers as doing interpretive work, but in today's reality they run into the same sorts of enforcement issues we find almost anywhere from public intoxication to motor vehicle infractions, to illicit pot growing, to illegal mountain bike riding, to the theft of historic artifacts, rare plants and creatures. Also consider that MTSP hosts over one million visitors per year making it one of the busiest of our State Parks.

The veil is finally being lifted. We look at the positive side and look toward a new DPR that will partner with the public in place of the old insular culture that has so badly infected that organization. It is our hope a full house cleaning will be done and from the ashes will arise a new, more effective agency better able to address the challenges it is facing in the 21st century.

- Larry Minikes

Trails Report

Fern Creek and Tavern Pump trails

With spectacular views from high on Mt. Tam, TCC volunteers made major improvements on the Fern Creek and Tavern Pump Trails on National Trails Day in June. These trails have steep sections that can be very erosive if water is not directed off the trail. Many water bars were repaired, several rolling dips added, and encroaching vegetation was trimmed back.

MMWD treated volunteers with pizza, beverages, salads, and more...followed by dessert with ice cream! All this from the spectacular West Point Inn! Thank you, MMWD!

Note: As of August 4, Fern Creek Trail between Alice Eastwood and Lost Trail has been re-opened. The tree was removed and the reroute at the slide widened. There are still some repairs needed on the bridge, but it has been secured and the broken pieces removed. Work will be complete in the next few weeks.

Miller Trail

July found us again near the Top O' Tam working on the Miller Trail. We worked both the south and north sides of the Tam Ridge. Experienced TCC volunteers repaired water bars, repaired tread, and restored proper trail routing.

Join Us!

If you like Mt. Tam, come out for trail days. You will have a ball, and may find you have a knack for it. Remember, your knowledge of Mt. Tam can only help State Parks, MMWD, Muir Woods, etc.

- Carlo Gardin

TAMALPAIS GUARDIAN

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Tamalpais Conservation Club

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DIRECTORS:

Sid Baskin, Arlin Weinberger

MEETINGS:

Monthly: Board of Directors meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Tamalpais Conservation Club office at 7 p.m. Members are welcome. Call 389-9914 for directions.
Annual: In May, Mt. Tam.
Semi-Annual: In September, Mt. Tam.

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MEMBERSHIP FOR INDIVIDUALS:

Regular	\$ 25.00/yr
Affordable	\$ 5.00/yr
Life	\$250.00/one time only

Send Change of Address and Membership to:

**Tamalpais Conservation Club, P.O. Box 2272
Mill Valley, CA 94942**

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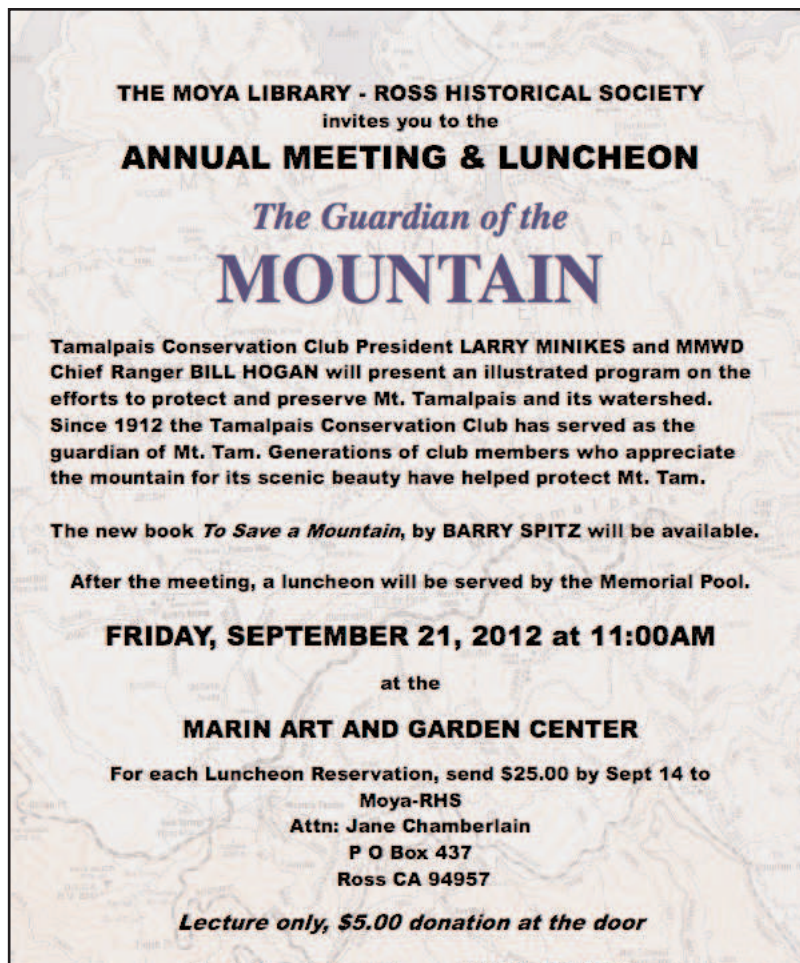
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Tamalpais Conservation Club

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TIME VALUE



THE MOYA LIBRARY - ROSS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
invites you to the
ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON

The Guardian of the
MOUNTAIN

Tamalpais Conservation Club President LARRY MINIKES and MMWD Chief Ranger BILL HOGAN will present an illustrated program on the efforts to protect and preserve Mt. Tamalpais and its watershed. Since 1912 the Tamalpais Conservation Club has served as the guardian of Mt. Tam. Generations of club members who appreciate the mountain for its scenic beauty have helped protect Mt. Tam.

The new book *To Save a Mountain*, by BARRY SPITZ will be available.

After the meeting, a luncheon will be served by the Memorial Pool.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2012 at 11:00AM

at the
MARIN ART AND GARDEN CENTER

For each Luncheon Reservation, send \$25.00 by Sept 14 to
Moya-RHS
Attn: Jane Chamberlain
P O Box 437
Ross CA 94957

Lecture only, \$5.00 donation at the door