

MINUTES
Inverness Ridge Association Board Meeting
May 8, 2021
Via Zoom

Present: Tamia Marg (for Firesafe discussion), Sydne Bortel, Joe Burgess (honorary member 2021), Chris Eckert, Den Drexler (for the road repaving discussion), Jennifer Howard, John Levy (for road repaving discussion), Leah Light, Julie (and Randy) Merk, Michael Ongerth, Glen Sherman (Guest), Tim Stanton, David Wilson, Patty Wimpfheimer

Absent: Ron Bennett, Marcus Thygeson

Discussion with Point Reyes National Seashore Superintendent Craig Kenkel (Moderated by Sydne Bortel)

Sydne Bortel welcomed Craig Kenkel, thanked him for his willingness to meet with us today, and outlined issues for discussion. For issues related to coastal plan decisions that affect us, contact the park offices.

- Fuel Reduction and Fire Safety: Craig has talked with Greg Jones, fire management officer, who is meeting with the Marin/Tamalpais fire management people about fuel reduction on the Inverness ridge, a target for them. They are also reviewing the response to the Woodward Fire with an eye to thinking through how to be better prepared for future fire events. From the perspective of technical regional and national experts, the intervention was successful with good county/state integration. Jennifer Howard noted that once teams were in place things moved well but there was no initial air support. Craig explained that the park service itself has no aviation equipment for fire suppression or response but must cooperate with state and national groups. The federal government is examining prospects for expediting fuel reduction and we are looking at how the federal government can respond faster. Julie Merk inquired as to whether President Biden's infrastructure proposal might provide moneys to be used for wildfire management; Craig will explore this.
- Trail and Beach Openings. David Wilson noted that the uneven opening of different areas of the park created a lack of clarity about how openings will proceed. Craig responded that Bear Valley is now open and that additional trails will open once their areas have been surveyed for damaged trees that constitute safety hazards. Drake's Beach is closed as elephant seals are moving more inland in response to a need for sheltered areas because of climate change. With respect to repaving of Sir Francis Drake, this is a federal highway project over which the park has no control and changes in parking at Drake's Beach are part of the project to restore the lagoon and change the configuration of the parking lot. The Visitor's Center is expected to re-open the week of May 10 to 25% capacity.
- General Plan. Sydne Bortel asked about the general park management plan for ranches. Craig reminded us that the Coastal Commission voted by 5:4 to approve the general park management plan amendment contingent with some changes to make sure that it is

consistent with coastal zone management regulations. There need to be strategies for drought action, such water conservation in the park and on the ranches. The park will work towards reducing water consumption and individual ranches are also asked to provide plans for drought management that include specification of number and type of animals. The park has also agreed to do regular water testing. He stressed the importance of working to define relationships of local parks with tribal associations in regard to ancestral homelands, both locally and for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, including management of the seashore and elk populations. The park is also working on how to bring water to the elk if needed due to drought conditions. Elk were not present at Tomales Point during the last major drought in 1976-77. Once the general management plan amendment is ready for implementation, legal challenges are to be expected.

Treasurer's Report (as per Patty Wimpfheimer's email)

The balance as of March 13, 2021 was \$10,235.81. Income from March 13 to May 6 was \$643.40 (\$593.35 dues, \$50.00 chipping fees, \$0.05 interest) with PayPal fees of \$6.70 the only expense. As of May 7, our balance is \$10,879.21.

Minutes of March 13

Approved.

Announcements

Jennifer Howard reported that all heavy construction of the water tank has been completed. The exterior has been stained and it is now in service. The old tank is expected to be gone by the end of the year. Landscaping and any road repair (see below) will be contracted out. The North Marin Water District sign has been removed from the bottom of the road.

Road Repaving Task Force

Ken Drexler reported that the Task Force expects to have one more meeting prior to sending the plan for approval to the county. Once approval is obtained, the plan will be circulated to the community for discussion at a Zoom meeting.

PRERAB

Michael Ongerth reported that there are new potholes on paved roads, especially at lower Drake's View Drive and some side roads. There is no significant damage due to tank construction so that North Marin Water District is not expected to incur road repair costs for this project. The dirt roads are dusty but there is little potholing. We do need to keep debris from ditches along side roads.

With respect to vegetation management, we need more than one bid for weed whipping. Contractors are very busy so this may take a while to accomplish. At present only one

contractor has expressed interest in the job and that contractor is also quite busy. There are also sightline issues that can hopefully be addressed through Firesafe Marin.

Firesafe Task Force

David Wilson summarized a meeting on April 14 with Jordan Reeser. Money for the current fiscal year is available and Jordan indicated willingness to entertain a proposal for a project that costs from \$40,000 to \$80,000. Our proposed project would involve Sunnyside from Behr to the end and the bottom of Lower Dover. Permission to clear will be needed from owners of property on these strips using a form to be obtained from the Fire Department. Permission from the park to work on parcels it owns is expected. Tamia Marg added that the Sunnyside to Behr Lane corridor needs to have improved sightlines; there are only about six property owners so permission to work on their properties will hopefully be easy to get. Work is projected to occur by July/August.

Over the longer term, we would like to have fire information on the IRA website reorganized and consolidated with a page or heading called Wildfire. Marin Firesafe has a good website and has done some useful webinars. Tim suggested working with Patty Wimpfheimer to improve the website.

We also need to plan ahead for future multiyear projects involving Measure C and Cal Fire funds. These might include state park property north of us which is not well maintained and private unimproved areas where vegetation management is poor. Poor maintenance of both public and private land pose threats to our fire safety. Tamia noted that home hardening is a priority and is being urged over defensible space at this time. Even fairly minor projects on the outside of homes can reduce fire damage. Jennifer Howard inquired as to why the focus is on hardening homes rather than defensible space. Tamia noted that even within defensible space the target is now on the first five feet around structures and that using vents that prevent embers from entering structures can save homes that might otherwise be lost even when defensible space has been optimized.

Chipping

Mike Ongerth reported that the first chipping day would take place shortly after June 1 and will be an IRA-sponsored event. The second chipping day will take place in early July and is funded by Measure C; it will be necessary for people to sign up for the event but it is free. Although pile size rules are about the same as ours, we expect that pretty much everything will be chipped. We also anticipate a third chipping day funded by Measure C in October. At this time, we have no planned additional chipping day sponsored by IRA and one may not be needed. The original thought had been to have this after Labor Day but it has not been scheduled and will be considered again at the July Board meeting. The need for people to tag their piles to receive IRA chipping was stressed; piles without tags will not be chipped. Because there will be two chipping days in close proximity there may be confusion about which piles are intended for which day; Julie Merk recommended that we use two tag colors to clearly demarcate piles for IRA and Measure C chipping events. Ultimately if we have enough Measure C chipping days,

we may be able to retire the IRA-sponsored chipping program. Also, if our proposed bond measure passes, it might be possible to fund chipping with the vegetation management fee. One concern currently is that too few people may sign up for the IRA chipping day so that we do not meet the minimum number of piles we have contracted for with Inverness Garden Services.

Signage

Following discussion it was moved and passed (with three abstentions) that we have a sign at the bottom of Drake's View Drive that reads "Private Road" (line 1) "Residents and Guests Only" (line 2). The sign will also have a means to display a message notifying people if there is a red flag day. Ron Bennett will be asked to work on a design for this sign and to circulate his suggestion to the IRA board. Discussion about a possible sign for the top of Drake's View Drive continued, focusing on the exact location of such a sign (at the top where the parking spots are located or somewhat lower where fire fighting equipment can turn around), John Levy suggested that the sign read "No Parking Fire Lane." However, the Fire Department will not put signs on private roads so the appropriateness of this is in question. David Wilson noted that we have allowed free passage on our road for so long that people might argue that trying to limit access might be illegal. It was also suggested that we could specify no parking on red flag days or overnight. The signage working group was asked to continue mulling over these complex issues and to come back with suggestions.

Next Meeting

Date: July 10, 2021

Place: To be determined whether we Zoom or meet in person