



# TAMALPAIS GUARDIAN

*Guardian of the Mountain since 1912*

## President's Message:

### Late Summer 2020

SARS-Cov-2 has muffled most activities, except for use of the Watershed land, which has at least doubled. The huge increase in users has brought strains and problems for the district.

The TCC had hoped, early, that we might have a September meeting, but clearly that is not to be.

Meanwhile, two possible upcoming events of importance cannot yet be shared, leaving this a very short column. Stay well out there.

Janice D Barry, MD

## Update on MMWD

*By Joan Bennett*

At MMWD's July 7, 2020 hearing on the increased visitors' impact on the watershed, we shared our board's observations on this issue. We encourage our members to inform the Board of your observations as well.

1. Unquestionably, visitor usage has skyrocketed. Weekday visitation is now on a par with a typical extremely busy holiday weekend pre-virus shut down. In fact, it is estimated that weekend visitation has doubled from 10,000 visitors per weekend to 20,000. Yet currently, the watershed is patrolled by just a handful of full time rangers. On some weekends, only two rangers patrol the District's 18,000 acres, from Mill Valley to Bolinas Ridge to Ross Valley. This is an insuperable job for so few people.
2. With the increase in visitors, there is a very noticeable increase in litter - everywhere. The litter ranges from baby diapers in the barbeque pits at Lake Lagunitas, toilet paper in the parking lots, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, bags of dog poop, energy bar wrappers, cigarette butts, and

the like. Unfortunately, of particular concern is human feces and soiled toilet paper in the bushes, especially along the trails along side the lakes.

3. On the subject of toilets, it appears that more are needed. The stench from the porta-potties is particularly foul now, all week long, not just after the weekends, which we infer means that they are near or exceeding capacity. We do not know if this means that they need to be cleaned more frequently or if more porta-potties are needed.
4. Cars are parked on dry grass areas along the road to Bon Tempe, along Sky Oaks road near the pay station and elsewhere. Naturally, this is a fire hazard.
5. User conflicts appear to be on the rise as well. While the hiker v. biker tension has existed for years on the watershed, it usually erupted in dueling letters in the IJ. We now see and hear heated yelling matches between hikers and bikers on the watershed. Throw in the increase in e-bike use, and the conflict has become markedly exacerbated.
6. While in the past, visitors surreptitiously dipped into the lakes, we now see people wading in Bon Tempe, splashing in the water, letting their dogs swim alongside of them, etc., even though signs clearly indicate no swimming is permitted.
7. Bike use on trails is up tremendously. There is no trail without bike tracks. The difference is that now, a sizable portion of the visitors seem to be clueless about this prohibition. We have encountered at least ten cyclists on the Sunnyside Trail in the last month in mid-afternoon. When we told the cyclists that it was illegal to be on the trail, unsurprisingly, we got the usual answers: I didn't know; I have never done this before; I didn't see the sign; I was told it was ok; etc.
8. Dogs off leash are on the rise. About three weeks ago, a woman's large dog was chasing deer, fawns included, in the meadow near the Pumpkin Ridge trail-head. When informed to leash her dog because it was chasing the fawns, she just shrugged.
9. The speed limit on Sky Oaks road is 15 mph. That is for obvious reasons: to protect the wildlife and drivers on a narrow curving road. Visitors to the watershed rarely observe the speed limit. In fact, along the straightaway on Sky Oaks near the ranger station, two cars were observed drag racing a few weeks ago.

**Continued on Page 3**

**Tamalpais Conservation Club**

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 Marin Art & Garden Center

**OFFICERS:**

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**TREASURER:** Perry Cole

**DIRECTORS:**

Basia Crane, Chris Barry, Ron Naso

**MEETINGS:**

**Monthly:** Board of Directors meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Tamalpais Conservation Club office at 7p.m. Members are welcome.

**MEMBERSHIP FOR INDIVIDUALS:**

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

**Send Change of Address and Membership to:**

Tamalpais Conservation Club  
 P.O. Box 532  
 Ross, CA 94957  
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 Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Gift: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tamalpais Conservation Club Finance Statement  
 FY May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020  
 Submitted by Perry Cole, Treasurer

**OPERATION RECEIPTS - 2020**

Dividends & Interest	\$30,284
Donations - all types	\$25,919
Dues - all types	\$650
Reimbursement	\$125
Other Income	\$6
Book Sales	\$51
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$57,035</b>

**OPERATION EXPENSES - 2020**

Bank Service Charges	\$205
Computer: Internet/Web	\$370
Dues & Subscriptions	\$495
Insurance	\$3,641
Outside Services	\$80
Postage	\$745
Printing	\$1,346
Program Expenses	\$167
Rent -Storage Unit & USPS	\$1,306
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$8,355</b>
<b>OPERATING NET GAIN/LOSS</b>	<b>\$48,680</b>

**TOTAL ASSETS AS OF APRIL 30, 2020**

Endowment Fund	\$535,056
Money Market Fund	\$12,317
Union Bank Checking	\$22,843
Plus Income (see above)	\$57,085
Less Expenses (see above)	-\$8,355
FY Change in Market Value	\$118,249
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$737,195</b>

**TAMALPAIS CONSERVATION CLUB FINANCE IN REVIEW**

*By Perry Cole*

The Tamalpais Conservation Club experienced a substantial increase in receipts of \$57,000 for the last fiscal year (May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020) compared to previous years. However, due to a stock market correction, there was a 15% loss in the Endowment Fund resulting in lower total assets. The volatility was attributed largely to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consistent with funding TCC’s goals, TCC provided donations to the Conservation Corps of North Bay and the California Invasive Plant Council. These two non-profits are involved in projects concerning wild fire suppression.

TCC wants to thank the many generous members and organizations who have continued to support our mission of protecting Mount Tamalpais. Members are P Nonneman, and J & S Murphy; in memory of Elizabeth Gleason are R Sullivan, L & R McHugh, M Fontaine and the Elizabeth G Gleason Restated Trust; and in memory of Gordon Oehser are J Davis and C & J Binnings. TCC greatly appreciates the donations from the Mill Valley Market, Amazon Smile and craigslist Charitable Fund.

9. *continued from front page* They stopped at the bottom of the hill, gunned their engines, and then sped down the road with young children hanging out of the car windows.

10. There appears to be an increase in accidents on the watershed. We note that the chart for Item 6 in the staff report indicates that by mid-2020, there were a total of 43 incidents requiring medical assistance compared to 69 last year, which is not a good trend. In the past month, we have seen at least three air rescues over the watershed, where all were, we are uncertain. We do know that one was along the Lakeview Road on the short, steep downhill covered with gravel - an elderly man wiped out on his e-bike and was transported via helicopter to John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek with severe head trauma.

These are just a few of our observations, but there are plenty more.

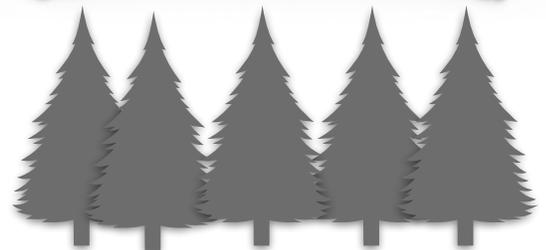
It appears that the number of visitors to the watershed is not declining. If it stays at the current rate or increases, then we assume that the only effective way that MMWD may address the increase in volume is with more rangers commensurate with the increased demand. If so, then the sooner the hiring process starts, the better, since it is so lengthy.

Additionally, it may be time for MMWD to increase watershed usage fees, and if legal, increase the fees for non-MMWD customer visitors who do not pay into the system.

Medical Aid Type	2017	2018	2019	Mid-2020
<b>Bike Accident/Injury</b>	28	23	34	28
<b>Hiking Accident/Injury</b>	30	20	24	10
<b>E-Bike Accident/Injury</b>	1	0	1	3
<b>Other</b>	11	11	10	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>43</b>

**Temporary Weekday Road Closure**

Beginning August 3 through August 28, Dibblee/Lagunitas Road between Natalie Coffin Green Park and Glenwood Avenue will be closed to vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, due to the Ross Reservoir landslide repair work. Only vehicles with use permits will be allowed to access the parking lot area. The road and the parking lot at Natalie Coffin Green Park will remain open on weekends. During construction, pedestrians can access the watershed via the Lower Ross Trail.



**September Meeting & Picnic Cancelled**

We regretfully must add our annual September meeting and picnic to the long list of events cancelled on account of COVID-19. We look forward to seeing you all in May 2021, or if we're lucky, out on the trails sooner than that.

**Don't forget to vote!**

Your ballot for TCC Board positions is included in this newsletter. We ask that you submit your ballot by mail no later than

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2020**

As a result of COVID-19, our April newsletter, May election, and 2019 Finance Statement were delayed.

Time Value

Address Service Requested

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