

MORAGA HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

October 2017

Calendar of Events

October 17 – MHA at Laura Stetson's

7 pm social time, 7:30 meeting

2217 Parker St., Berkeley

November 21 –MHA at Gayle's

December – Holliday party at Shivani and Daniel's



Since we are unable to hold the Ponies and Pumpkins this year, I thought it would be good to revisit last year's very soggy event 😊

MHA Meeting Minutes 9/19/17

Members present: Gary Fend, Laura Fend, Ute Frey, Jackie Frost, Shivani Rajan Hetschel, Gayle Jackson, Mo Livermore, Kristin Ojala, Linda Sanders, Jenni Smith, Laura Stetson, Liz Strauss

Guests: Linus Eukel and Emily Stoddard (both from John Muir Land Trust)

The meeting was called to order at 7:39pm.

President Jenni Smith introduced our guests, Linus Eukel - Executive Director of John Muir Land Trust, and Emily Stoddard - Community

Outreach Coordinator of John Muir Land Trust. She explained that John Muir Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization focused on preserving land as open space for recreation and natural use in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, since 1989. JMLT recently acquired Fernandez Ranch in northern Contra Costa county, and even more recently acquired Carr Ranch (604 acres) in the Moraga area. They have come to our meeting to describe their new project, which involves acquisition of land near our pasture.

A motion was made by Laura Fend to adopt the minutes from the August meeting. The motion was seconded by Kristen, and passed unanimously.

Linus Eukel was invited to describe the projects of John Muir Land Trust which are relevant to MHA. He brought two large posters that described JMLT and showed a map that included Carr Ranch, along with other possible future JMLT acquisitions. He explained that acquisition of Carr Ranch demonstrated JMLT's ability to close a 7 million dollar project critical to watershed and water quality, and to partner closely with EBMUD. JMLT holds the title for this property, and EBMUD will hold it in perpetuity as watershed and open space. All of the trails on Carr Ranch will be open for equestrian use. On October 14th a Grand Opening for Carr Ranch will be held at Rancho Laguna Park in Moraga. All are invited to attend.

John Muir Land Trust has a new Moraga Hills Campaign that involves several properties, including land located across from Campolindo High School and adjacent to the Palos Colorados development. This represents 400 acres that will be permanently preserved, close to downtown Moraga and very accessible to the

public for walking. Heading south is another parcel, Harvey Ranch, currently owned by a family with a deep ethos for conservation. Altogether, JMLT would like to acquire four parcels. Acquisition of these parcels would also accomplish adjoining/protecting St. Marys College campus with more open space and forming a gateway of access to Carr Ranch. Together these four parcels would provide a total of 1400 more permanently preserved acres in Moraga. JMLT is calling this project the Moraga Hills Campaign. It is still in the planning stage. They plan to acquire this land without any agency money, which means that they need to raise five million dollars. They have one million dollars after 12 weeks of intense fundraising. They hope to have the second phase of this project complete by spring, which will require raising 2.5 million dollars. The finish line for this project is that they hope to acquire it by the end of 2019. JMLT would like to work with MHA on this project. All of this land will be appropriate for equestrian use, and they want to hear from us about what is best for horse access and use. JMLT is actively seeking our involvement, and asked members to give them our contact information on a signup sheet. Linus explained that the trails on these properties have historically been used by the public, setting a precedent for public use. All JMLT properties are/will be open to the public. Public access is a critical aspect of JMLT's goals, balanced with habitat preservation, and preservation of natural watersheds. Their philosophy is that people need to use the land and learn to take care of it, with JMLT providing perpetual stewardship of the land. Into the future, permanently restricted endowment funds will provide for ranger(s) and upkeep of the properties they hope to acquire, although their organization is very lean. EBMUD will be the main steward for Carr Ranch, since they are

the most direct beneficiary of the important watershed that this property represents. No mountain bikes are allowed in the watershed. EBMUD will not play a similar role in the JMLT's new Moraga Hills acquisition, this property will be managed by JMLT directly. Kristin raised the point that we as a club are open to multi-use trails but feel that there is a need to educate the public about horses and trail safety. She explained that currently, equestrians avoid certain parks or riding on certain days of the week because some parks in our area are impacted, or have significant problems with unleashed dogs, or bikes. There was a discussion of the fact that dog owners in our area have a strong voice and many of them want dogs to be allowed off leash. Linus welcomed a discussion of how to educate the public to keep their open spaces safe for equestrians. JMLT wants to acquire the new Moraga properties as a "Fee title" acquisition which means that they will be able to control its use directly. These four properties include critical mitigation habitat, which is one more reason why they will need to manage access and dogs. Linus described JMLT as a friendly organization that is interested in promoting and maximizing community benefit. For the Carr Ranch property, dogs must be on leash. Linus indicated that in all likelihood, the new properties would allow dogs on-leash only as well. Their goal is to have shared use in a safe way. It was pointed out that Fernandez Ranch, another JMLT property in northern Contra Costa county, allows dogs off-leash. Before the Moraga properties are opened to the public, JMLT will have a public comment period, and they will strive for community based stewardship. Linus emphasized that he wants to stay in touch with MHA and is interested in our input. There was a question about the type of gates that will be present in Carr Ranch, and

whether they will be equestrian friendly. Linus welcomed our input and offered to let MHA members review the gates they are considering. There are some cattle guards on the property, but not on the loop or in the public access areas. He invited MHA members to make an appointment to come out to Carr Ranch the following week to view the areas that will have gates and discuss gate design. This needs to be done quickly because they need to install the new gates before the October 14th grand opening of Carr Ranch. They intend to keep Carr Ranch accessible to horses 365 days per year, from dawn to dusk, so trails will be maintained toward this goal. Linus handed out cards with his contact numbers, and invited members to take announcements about the Carr Ranch grand opening and other literature about JMLT that he brought.

Jenni Smith thanked Linus for coming to the meeting and speaking with us, and she suggested that MHA members sign in on the sheet that he brought and provide them with our contact information. This concluded the President's Report. The JMLT guests left, and a short break was taken from the meeting.



Vice President's report: We have no new members. Gayle is willing to take any payment checks and make deposits, since it is easier for her to carry out these local transactions than it is for Rob. Fourteen of the 16 pasture spaces are currently occupied. Liz Strauss's horse Riva,

and the Fends' new horse Nahlee have joined the herd this past month. There is no real need to fill the last two open spaces, since the pasture account has plenty of money in it, and we are waiting for an updated assessment of pasture capacity from EBMUD. All of the people currently on the pasture waiting list have been offered a space and have declined the option to bring a horse in at this time.



Treasurer's Report (given by Kristin): The general account has a balance of \$13,010.78. The pasture account has a balance of \$26,172.48. The club's insurance was paid this past month out of the general account. EBMUD has increased our insurance requirement, which will cost an additional \$500. The club's insurance is liability insurance only.

Pasture report: Laura reported that the pasture is dry and the horses are hungry. The new fence is almost finished, it just needs a couple more strands and a gate. The new space will not be

used for the typical herd rotation, it will be used for "metabolically challenged" horses that need feeding arrangements that are different from the rest of the herd.

Old business: Demolition of the Canyon Road bridge has begun. The work on utilities around the bridge has been completed. The target date for opening a temporary (used) bridge that will be brought in from elsewhere still seems to be mid-November.



New business: Kristen pointed out that the John Muir Land Trust is soliciting donations, and she raised the topic of whether we want to donate some money to this group. There was discussion of the fact that we are not holding a public event this year to bring in any extra funds, but we do have enough money in the general account to consider making a donation. Getting more local trails that we can ride on is an appropriate thing for us to spend money on. Laura Fend made a motion to donate \$1,000 to John Muir Land Trust, and Gayle seconded the motion. Mo pointed out that the trails on the properties under consideration for purchase in the Moraga Hills Campaign are good quality trails that may potentially even help provide access into Las Trampas eventually. San Ramon Valley Horsemen's Association may also be willing to support this campaign. The point was made that JMLT's Stewardship Committee may benefit from equestrian representation. The

motion to donate \$1,000 to JMLT was passed unanimously, with none opposed. Jenni will ask Rob to write check. There was general agreement that the check should be specifically earmarked for the Moraga Hills Campaign acquisition, and not simply be donated into the JMLT general fund.

Next month we will work on identifying candidates to nominate for next year's Board of Directors.

After discussion, the date chosen for this year's Christmas party is Sunday Dec 10th.

Jenni thanked Jackie for hosting the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

Minutes submitted by Linda Sanders

