



# NOTICE OF THE WATERSHED COMMITTEE MEETING/SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 9:30 AM

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## AGENDA

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### LOCATIONS:

**Open Session to start at or after 9:30 a.m.**

Marin Water Board Room – 220 Nellen Avenue, Corte Madera, CA 94925

### Public Participation:

The public may attend this meeting in-person or remotely using the following methods:

On a computer or smart device, go to: <https://marinwater.zoom.us/j/81071577373>

By phone, dial: **1-669-444-9171** and use Webinar ID: **810 7157 7373**

### HOW TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT:

**During the Meeting:** Typically, you will have 3 minutes to make your public comment, however, the board president may shorten the amount of time for public comment due to a large number of attendees. Furthermore, pursuant to Government Code, section 54954.2 (the Brown Act), the Board may not take action or discuss any item that does not appear on the agenda.

-- **In-Person Attendee:** Fill out a speaker card and provide to the board secretary. List the number/letter (ex: 6a) of the agenda item(s), for which you would like to provide a comment. Once you're called, proceed to the lectern to make your comment.

-- **Remote Attendee:** Use the "raise hand" button on the bottom of the Zoom screen. If you are joining by phone and would like to comment, press \*9. The board secretary will use the last four digits of your phone number to call on you (dial \*6 to mute/unmute).

**In Advance of the Meeting:** Submit your comments by email in advance of the meeting to [boardcomment@marinwater.org](mailto:boardcomment@marinwater.org). To ensure that your comment is provided to the Board of Directors prior to the meeting, please email your comment 24 hours in advance of the meeting start time. Comments received after this cut off time will be sent to the Board after the meeting. Please do not include personal information in your comment such as phone numbers and home addresses.

## AGENDA ITEMS:

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
2. **Adoption of Agenda**
3. **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters**

This is the time when any person may address the Board of Directors on matters not listed on this agenda, but which are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board.

4. **Regular Items** (9:40 a.m. – Time Approximate)

- a. Minutes of the Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors' Meeting on October 17, 2024

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the minutes

- b. Azalea Hill Project Update

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive update on the Azalea Hill Project

- c. Watershed Jubata Grass Control

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive a staff presentation

- d. Watershed Recreation Management Planning Feasibility Study Update Regarding Stewardship and Visitor Facilities

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive update

5. **Upcoming Meeting**

The next Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

6. **Adjournment** (10:40 a.m. – Time Approximate)

## ADA NOTICE AND HEARING-IMPAIRED PROVISIONS

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California Law, it is Marin Water's policy to offer its public programs, services, and meetings in a manner that is readily accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities. If you are an individual with a disability and require a copy of a public hearing notice, an agenda, and/or agenda packet in an appropriate alternative format, or if you require other accommodations, please contact the Board Secretary/ADA Coordinator at 415.945.1448, at least two business days in advance of the meeting. Advance notification will enable Marin Water to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility.

*Information agendas are available for review at the Civic Center Library, Corte Madera Library, Fairfax Library, Mill Valley Library, Marin Water Administration Building, and [marinwater.org](http://marinwater.org).*

Posted: 12-13-2024



# STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Type:** Watershed Committee/Board of Directors  
**Title:** Minutes of the Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors’ Meeting on October 17, 2024  
**From:** Terrie Gillen, Board Secretary  
**Through:** Ben Horenstein, General Manager  
**Meeting Date:** December 19, 2024

**TYPE OF ACTION:** X    Action                            Information                            Review and Refer

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the minutes

**SUMMARY:** The Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors’ Meeting took place on October 17, 2024. The minutes of that meeting are attached.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** Not applicable.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Draft October 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

DEPARTMENT OR DIVISION	DIVISION MANAGER	APPROVED
Communications & Public Affairs Department	 <b>Terrie Gillen</b> Board Secretary	 <b>Ben Horenstein</b> General Manager



# NOTICE OF THE WATERSHED COMMITTEE MEETING/SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 9:30 AM

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## MINUTES

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### LOCATIONS:

**Open Session to start at or after 9:30 a.m.**

Marin Water Board Room – 220 Nellen Avenue, Corte Madera, CA 94925

### Public Participation:

The public attended this meeting in-person or remotely using the following methods: on a computer or smart device, <https://marinwater.zoom.us/j/81071577373>, or by phone, 1-669-444-9171 using Webinar ID No.: 810 157 7373.

### AGENDA ITEMS:

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Matt Samson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

#### DIRECTORS PRESENT

Larry Russell

Jed Smith

Monty Schmitt

Matt Samson

#### DIRECTOR ABSENT

Ranjiv Khush

#### 2. Adoption of Agenda

Director Smith made the motion to adopt the agenda. Vice Chair Schmitt seconded the motion.

There were no public comments.

Voting Yea: Directors Russell, Schmitt, Smith, and Samson

**3. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters**

There was one (1) public comment.

**4. Regular Items**

- a. Minutes of the Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors' Meeting on September 19, 2024

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the minutes

Vice Chair Schmitt made the motion to approve the minutes. Director Smith seconded the motion.

There were no public comments.

Voting Yea: Directors Khush, Russell, Smith, Schmitt, and Samson

- b. Nicasio Creek Fisheries Study

**RECOMMENDATION:** Review and refer a professional services agreement for a fisheries study of Nicasio Creek to a future meeting of the Board of Directors for consideration of approval

Marin Water Fisheries Program Manager Jonathon Koehler presented this item.

Discussion ensued.

There were no public comments.

Vice Chair Schmitt made the motion to refer this item to the Board to consider for approval at a future meeting. Director Smith seconded the motion.

- c. Volunteer Program Update

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive a staff update on the District's volunteer program

Natural Resources Program Manager Carl Sanders introduced Ecologist/Watershed Volunteer Coordinator Suzanne Whalen, who provided a presentation.

Discussion followed.

There was one (1) public comment.

This was an information item. No formal action was taken.

**5. Upcoming Meeting**

The Board Secretary announced that the next Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors was scheduled for Thursday, December 19 at 9:30 a.m.

**6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Watershed Committee Meeting/Special Meeting of the Board of Directors adjourned on October 17, 2024 at 10:37 a.m.

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Board Secretary



# STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Type:** Watershed Committee/Board of Directors  
**Title:** Azalea Hill Project Update  
**From:** Shaun Horne, Director of Watershed Resources  
**Through:** Ben Horenstein, General Manager  
**Meeting Date:** December 19, 2024

*SH* *BH*

**TYPE OF ACTION:**                      Action                      X                      Information                      Review and Refer

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive update on the Azalea Hill Project

**SUMMARY:** On May 14, 2019 the District Board of Directors approved the Restoration of the Azalea Hill Trail Project (Project) through an amendment to the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) for the Restoration of Azalea Hill Trail (Project) and the adoption of the 2019 Azalea Hill Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project (IS/MND), including a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP). During calendar year 2024, the District installed one retaining wall, built two bridges, armored multiple rock crossings, improved trail drainage, hardened tread surfaces and maintained temporary project signage. In conjunction with the work on the Project, District staff and consultants continue to implement the MMRP. As part of ongoing implementation, District staff has identified the need to address site constraints and current conditions through potential future minor modifications to the Project. Staff will provide a short presentation that provides an overview of activities completed in 2024 and a summary of the potential future modifications to the Project.

**DISCUSSION:** Marin Water adopted an amendment to the *Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management Plan* (RTMP) for the Restoration of Azalea Hill (Project) on May 14, 2019. The Project will: 1) remove approximately 4.4-miles of non-system roads and trails and restore those routes to natural conditions to improve habitat and water quality; 2) adopt and improve a 1.9-mile Class IV road comprised of the existing Liberty Gulch Road (1.2 miles) and convert an existing non-system trail (0.7 miles) to the wider, small vehicle route; 3) improve the hiking and equestrian route over Azalea Hill by correcting erosion and drainage problems along approximately 1.1 miles of existing Class VI trail, rerouting the trail around sensitive plants and adopting 250 feet of an existing non-system trail; and 4) treat the Azalea Hill parking lot to correct its erosion problems and improve the visitor amenities.

Upon completion, the Project will prevent an estimated 219 cubic yards of sediment from entering Azalea Hill’s creeks and Alpine Lake annually (or 4,380 cubic yards over 20 years) and will restore approximately one acre of habitat. The Project consolidates the use of two existing routes proposed for

upgrades and provides a much-needed connection and safety improvement between the “Lakes” and “Pine Mountain” areas.

Work by district staff and contractors continued on Phases I, II & III, starting in April 2024, along existing sections of the ‘Azalea Hill’, ‘Liberty Gulch’ and ‘Old Ranch’ Trails. Work involved the installation of one retaining wall, two additional bridges, armoring multiple wet crossings, improving surface drainage and hardening tread surfaces along approximately 1.5 miles of trail that follows Bon Tempe Creek and then along the northeastern shoreline of Lake Alpine up to Bolinas-Fairfax Road. Multiple volunteer work days during 2024 continued to support tread improvements and brushing along Phase I, II & III alignments. For National Trails Day in June, over 40 volunteers assisted district staff with varied work across all three phases of the Project. Throughout 2024, the Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewards provided technical assistance and performed a supervisory role overseeing Conservation Corps North Bay crews during trail drainage improvements, armored wet crossing installations and trail corridor brushing. Funding for this work came from a State Parks Recreation Trails Program Grant, which was secured to support the implementation of the Liberty Gulch segment of the Project. Construction work will continue on Phases I, II & III through 2025.

CEQA requires a lead public agency to develop a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan or Program (MMRP) when making any necessary findings related to an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or when approving a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The intent of the MMRP is to document the mitigation measures required to be implemented. In accordance with Section 15074(d) of the CEQA Guidelines and California Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(a) (1), the District adopted the MMRP as presented in Appendix F of the Final IS/MND for the Project.

The MMRP includes all mitigation measures in the FEIR MMRP and new mitigation measures resulting from the Final IS/MND that is used to guide construction activities. To verify and document the required mitigation measures presented in the IS/MND, the District tracks all activities throughout the implementation phases. Pre-project surveys and ongoing monitoring and mitigation work is conducted by District staff, contractors and consultants. To facilitate construction and ensure compliance with the Azalea Hill IS/MND, pre-project surveys were conducted and an Environmental Mitigation Monitoring Check List was reviewed to track and document mitigation measures within the MMRP. All staff and contractors received pre-construction wildlife and rare plant avoidance training. Native plant surveys, first conducted in 2020, informed appropriate 2024 rare plant avoidance measures during the construction of the retaining wall and two bridges, as well as other tread improvements along the ‘Old Ranch’, ‘Fishermans’ and ‘Liberty Gulch’ Trails. Invasive plant removal targeted during Phase II and III work included: bull thistle, Italian thistle, bristly ox-tongue, tall fescue and false-brome. Split rail fencing and signs were installed in select areas to discourage the use of social trails in an effort to support decommissioning.

During the implementation of the Project, District staff have identified certain site constraints and existing conditions that support the need for minor modifications to the Project. The proposed changes encompass maintaining existing trail widths along a short portion of Segment 2 of the Liberty Gulch Trail, to avoid impacts to sensitive plant species. With this change, the trail segment would not meet Class IV standards from the 2005 Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management Plan (Roads and Trails Plan). Additionally, some stream crossings do not require any improvements. Staff is conducting review of these proposed changes and will bring a detailed report to a future meeting.



**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** On May 14, 2019, the District Board approved Resolution No. 8533 adopting the Azalea Hill Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Restoration of Azalea Hill Project and (2) approved Resolution No. 8534 which approved the Project and amended the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Road and Trail Management – Restoration of Azalea Hill.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None.



# STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Type:** Watershed Committee/Board of Directors  
**Title:** Watershed Jubata Grass Control  
**From:** Shaun Horne, Director of Watershed Resources  
**Through:** Ben Horenstein, General Manager  
**Meeting Date:** December 19, 2024

**TYPE OF ACTION:**                      Action                      X                      Information                      Review and Refer

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive a staff presentation

**SUMMARY:** Staff will present the efforts to control a patch of invasive jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) that has invaded rare plant habitat on the Watershed and explain how these actions fit into the vegetation management actions (MAs) outlined in the Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP), which was adopted in October of 2019.

**DISCUSSION:** In 2019, a half-acre patch of jubata grass was discovered invading a forested seep directly off of the Matt Davis Trail below West Point Inn. This discovery was possible thanks to our One Tam partners who conduct cyclical early detection rapid response (EDRR) surveys on watershed lands as described in MA-22, 'EDRR Expansion.' Jubata grass is listed as a high priority weed under Figures 3-2 through 3-5, which are referenced in MA-24, 'Grassland and Oak Woodland Improvement'.

As directed in MA-22 and MA-24, which describe treatment of newly discovered invasions and populations of high-priority weeds, treatment of the patch started in 2021 by contractors Forster and Kroeger and Hanford ARC. The patch was extremely dense, and required intensive treatment to manually dig out jubata grass individuals and pile the biomass on site. Three years of contractor treatment and a total of 328 hours has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the efforts needed to control this jubata grass patch. Another 15 staff hours were spent in 2024 on treatment and restoration efforts. Treatment has continued at this site yearly and, as directed in MA-22, will be, "revisited and retreated annually until the District records 5 consecutive years with no aboveground plants of the target weed."

The reduction in jubata grass cover at this site revealed the presence of a Mt. Tamalpais thistle (*Cirsium hydrophilum var. vaseyi*) in 2023. Mt. Tamalpais thistle is ranked as fairly threatened in California, on the California Rare Plant Rank as defined by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and is included in Appendix D, 'Special-Status Plants,' of the BFFIP. MA-25 specifically calls out Mt.

Tamalpais thistle and states, "existing populations will be augmented and/or habitat will be improved to benefit remaining rare species."

At the time of discovery of the Mt. Tamalpais thistle at the project site, it was also noted that the leftover jubata grass biomass was suppressing native plant recovery throughout the site. To encourage native regeneration of the Mt. Tamalpais thistle population and other desirable natives, three habitat improvements were attempted during 2023 and 2024: (1) direct seeding of native woody species that resulted in no regeneration; (2) caging which was constructed around resprouting native plants that successfully protected them against browse; and (3) invasive biomass manipulation into larger piles on site to minimize the mulching effect it was having on native regeneration.

The next steps in this project are to continue to assess the success of the biomass manipulation and consider other options for decreasing or moving the biomass. Lessons learned from the management of this jubata grass patch will be applied to better control other patches of jubata grass and similar species on the Watershed.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** The Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) adopted in 2019 covers all CEQA compliance for the work referenced in this report.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

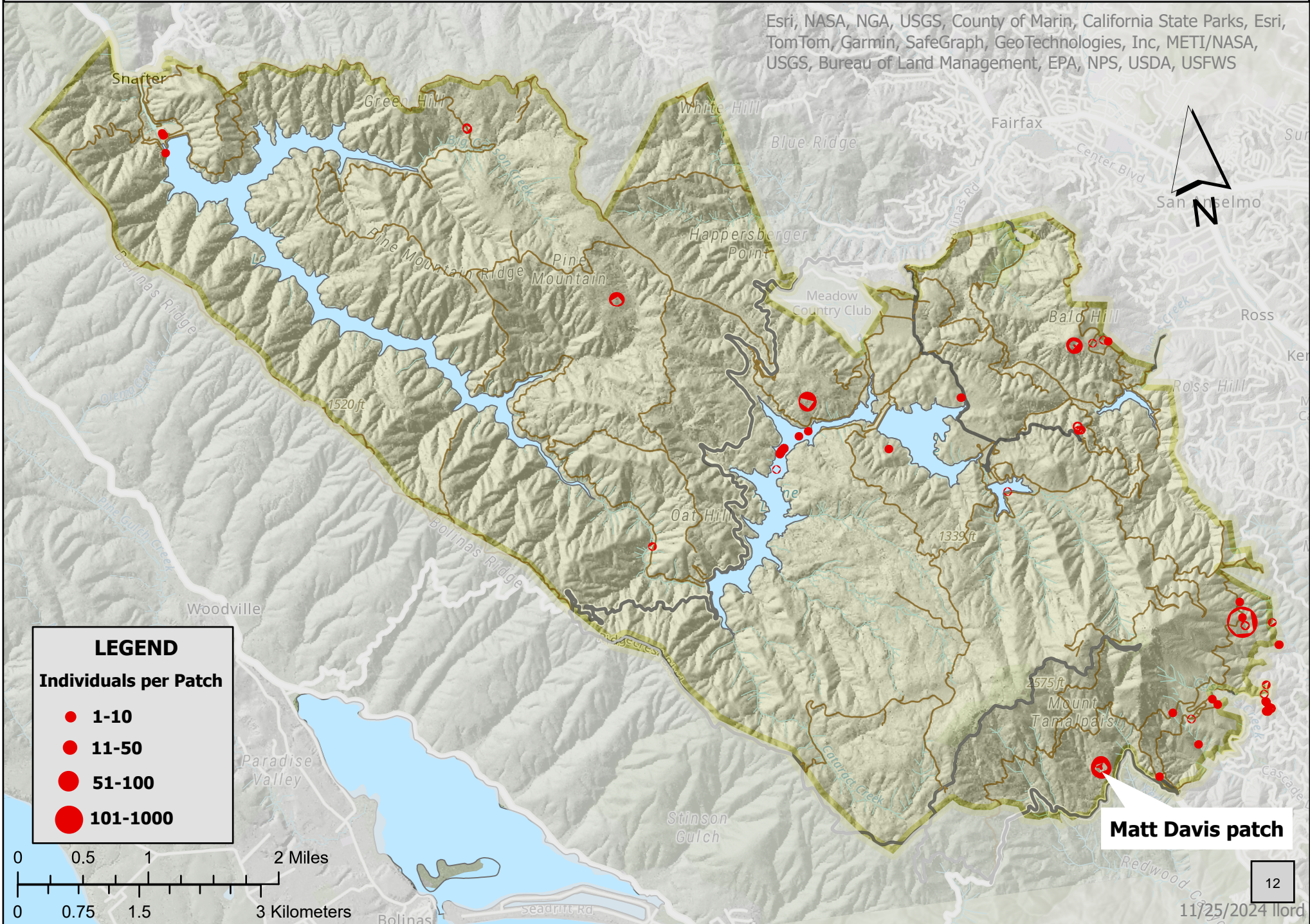
1. Occurrences of Cortaderia on the Watershed 2020-2024 Map

# Occurrences of Cortaderia on the Watershed 2020-2024

## Attachment 1

Section 4. Item #c.

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, County of Marin, California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

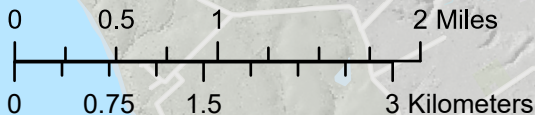


**LEGEND**

**Individuals per Patch**

- 1-10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 101-1000

**Matt Davis patch**





# STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Type:** Watershed Committee/Board of Directors  
**Title:** Watershed Recreation Management Planning Feasibility Study Update Regarding Stewardship and Visitor Facilities  
**From:** Shaun Horne, Director of Watershed Resources  
**Through:** Ben Horenstein, General Manager *BH SH*  
**Meeting Date:** December 19, 2024

**TYPE OF ACTION:**                      Action                      X                      Information                      Review and Refer

**RECOMMENDATION:** Receive update

**SUMMARY:** The Marin Municipal Water District (District) partnered with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (GGNPC) to engage District Board members, executive leadership, stakeholders, and constituents in early scoping of a Watershed Recreation Management Planning Feasibility Study (Feasibility Study). Since June 2022, the District has hosted six (6) community workshops, two (2) site visits, and completed an updated watershed census survey to solicit input relating to watershed operations and visitor management. The Board adopted the Feasibility Study at the April 16, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting. Staff will provide an update on the following Strategic Opportunities from the Feasibility Study that have recently been advanced, including: Watershed Stewardship, Visitor Services and Facilities.

**DISCUSSION:** Mt. Tamalpais and its adjacent watersheds support a rich array of plants and animals, panoramic vistas, and recreational opportunities that are treasured by residents and visitors alike. Since before the turn of the last century, Mt. Tamalpais has been a magnet for recreationists. The Marin Municipal Water District’s Mt. Tamalpais watershed lands receive approximately 2 million visitors annually and are part of the Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO 2002). Watershed users include anglers, hikers, equestrians, nature viewers, runners, walkers, youth camps, cyclists and many more. The District initiated a planning process designed to facilitate a conversation with the community around existing visitation in an effort to help address long-standing issues around various modes of recreation on Mt. Tamalpais.

The Feasibility Study reviewed existing watershed recreational facilities, visitor use data, biological resources, stewardship and volunteer programs, and visitor management strategies. The planning process aligned with the District’s adaptive watershed management strategy and informs multi-benefit outcomes that can be advanced to help protect the unique goals of different watershed visitors and the biodiversity of the District’s watershed lands. The final section of the Feasibility Study presents a

series of Strategic Opportunities organized around stewardship initiatives, visitor services, watershed facilities, and adaptive management operations. Staff will provide an update on the Feasibility Study's Strategic Opportunities that have been advanced over the past quarter, including Watershed Stewardship, Visitor Services and Facilities.

The District has developed a webpage to keep the community updated on the planning process and where the Feasibility Study can be viewed: (<https://www.marinwater.org/WatershedRecPlan>).

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** Not Applicable.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None.