

*Advocates for the Natural World*



Photo by Diane Larkins Griffeath (MC39)

# **Environmental Forum of Marin**

## **2014–2015**

### **Annual Report**



## **Promoting a Sustainable World through Environmental Education**

Environmental Forum of Marin promotes a sustainable world by providing exceptional educational programs on environmental issues.

Founded 1972

Environmental Forum of Marin

A California, 501(c)3, nonprofit organization

#94-2644185

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## Message from the President

### ***A Transformative Year***

In last year's Annual Meeting I summed up the state of the Forum in one word: Transition. This past year can be summed up as: Effectively transforming.

The areas of focus during the past twelve months have been

- Re-launching the Master Class program with an entirely new structure
- Planning and producing Lecture Series 2015
- Expanded outreach to the broader community and partner organizations
- Completion of a new strategic plan

Our top priority following last year's Annual Meeting was to launch Master Class 41. At the time, we didn't know if we could attract students to the new format, much less did we know if we could fill the class and whether the new format would be effective and meaningful to the students. MC41 was serving essentially as a pilot program, testing whether a modular format would work.

I am very pleased to report that we did fill the class, the graduates are excellent and the new format has proved very effective. The Director's report on MC41 provides more detail, so I can simply sum up that streamlining the program has made it organizationally sustainable while maintaining the program's educational caliber and effectiveness.

We integrated Lecture Series 2015 with MC41 as Module 2 of the Master Class. This overlay was another important step in making the educational programs sustainable. The integration of these two modules likely will be refined further, but the initial combination has worked well.

Lecture Series 2015 offered eight lectures, up from four lectures in 2014. The topics covered, in sets of two lectures each, were Drought, Threatened Oceans, Climate Disruption and Building Community. The lectures introduced fresh perspectives on long-standing concerns. The topics and how we approached them reflected our deeper goal of expanding the Forum's reach into the community.

Throughout the year we worked on outreach. These efforts took on many dimensions. Our multiple events are described in the Development and Events report. While not every undertaking met our financial goals, overall we made significant progress. We continued to expand outreach through diverse communication avenues such as social media, Marin TV and other forms of electronic distribution. The Social Media Director's report provides detail about our exciting growth and expansion in this important area.

Of course, engaging with Forum graduates is one of the most enduring and enjoyable examples of outreach. The annual members-only holiday party at the Falkirk Mansion was again a time to celebrate the relationships we have with fellow alumni.

This year the Forum also succeeded in completing a new strategic plan. The Forum needed an updated plan to ensure the viability of the programs and the organization itself. As I noted at last year's Annual Meeting, it was vital to re-assess what we were doing and how we were going about doing it.

### **Strategic Plan**

The strategic planning process focused on 3 core areas: Educational Programs, Inclusivity and Organizational Effectiveness. The following summarizes our work.

#### *Educational Programs:*

Program viability means making the demands of producing the programs appropriate to an all-volunteer staff. Re-structuring the Master Class was a major step in ensuring the program could continue and be sustained over the long-term, while staying true to its mission to deliver rigorous environmental education.

#### *Inclusivity:*

During strategic planning, we identified that the decline in membership has been a long-term trend. It was clear the Forum needed to reverse this trend. We concluded that we should broaden membership to non-graduates to increase our membership base. Our membership can be opened to non-voting members under the existing Bylaws. Graduates of Forum programs will still enjoy the special benefits of graduate membership, including voting rights. Please read the Rationale for Creating a More Inclusive Organization produced by the Inclusivity Work Group, included at the end of this report.

#### *Organizational Effectiveness:*

Organizational effectiveness is a term describing a broad scope of issues. These issues include operational efficiencies and board strength.

During strategic planning, it became increasingly clear that hiring a part-time administrator to handle some of the time-consuming, routine operational tasks was an important new step for the Forum to take. These tasks absorb many, many hours—hours that the Board and other volunteers could better direct toward carrying out the Forum's mission. Additionally, ongoing operational support can ensure consistency and continuity of operations year after year. In turn, this consistency can lead to greater efficiencies in our operations.

We also determined that we can further strengthen the organization and the Board by augmenting our efforts with ad hoc committees, and by training and mentoring new Board members. Formalized support during Board transitions will do much to smooth the way for each Board to be effective.

Please read the proposed Bylaw revision that returns the Board Development Committee closer to standard Nominating Committee procedures. The revision is included in this document. We will be voting on whether to adopt this revision in the upcoming Annual Meeting. Your invitation included a link to the full Bylaws for your reference.

Marketing and communications came into focus as another critical aspect of organizational effectiveness. Building upon the groundwork laid over the last few years, the next Board will emphasize this strategically important area in the coming months. The underlying goal is to increase participation in the Master Class and Lecture Series. Our outreach will become more “customer-centric,” which simply means making it easier to engage with the Forum.

Operational support and the development of the Forum’s marketing program are fundamental initiatives designed to carry the organization forward. They are reflected in the proposed 2015-16 Budget under the line item Program and Organizational Development. As Development Director, Susan Rusche would focus specifically on raising funds for these expenditures.

### **Strategic Planning Phases**

Under the guidance of our planning consultant, Ben Toland, strategic planning was undertaken in 3 phases, titled Discovery, Identifying Options, and Making Choices.

During the first phase, we evaluated the Forum’s business eco-system, a term that describes the broader environment in which the Forum operates. We looked at trends, current and potential constituencies, other educational programs offered in the Bay Area, as well as additional means of offering our programs.

The second phase focused on identifying options for our programs and organizational structure. Work Groups were established for each of the core areas. The Work Groups delved into questions raised during the first group session and developed alternatives for consideration.

The final phase confirmed the goals and sub-goals for each core area. An extensive list of potential actions was developed to accompany these goals and sub-goals.

The goals, sub-goals and recommended actions represent the collective wisdom of many participants. Our four guiding lights—Marty, Kathy, Nona and Phyllis—as well as current and former program directors and other board members, participated at multiple points during the planning process.

The strategic planning process has yielded a guiding framework that is based on hours of discussion and input. Its conclusions will allow the next Board to determine priorities and timeframe. Your invitation contained a link to a summary of the plan. I encourage you to read it.

### **Summary**

The past twelve months are highlighted by transformative accomplishments. This Board and its many supporters have carried the organization forward. The Forum has a refreshed and relevant strategic plan, a new structure for the Master Class, and a dynamic Lecture Series. We have raised the organization’s profile and made new alliances. As we look to the next year and a new Board, we can say the Forum has regained its footing and is once again striding forward.

## 2015 Annual Meeting Agenda

**May 28, 2015**

**6:30–9:30pm**

### **Tamalpais Valley Community Center**

203 Marin Avenue  
Mill Valley, CA 94941

**6:30** Doors open, light refreshments

**7:00** 2015 Business Meeting called to order

- Introduction of 2014-2015 Board of Directors
- Report on State of Environmental Forum of Marin – Sarah Kelley
- Report on Master Class 41 and Lecture Series 2015 – Andrea Taylor
- Report on Master Class 41 Projects – Kate Powers
- Report of Fiscal Year 2014–2015 – Vicki Nichols
- Adoption of the 2015–2016 Budget – Vicki Nichols
- Vote on Proposed Revision to Bylaw – Sarah Kelley
- Board Development Committee Report – Susan Rusche
- Election of the 2015–2016 Officers and Directors – Sarah Kelley
- Recognition of Outgoing Directors – Sarah Kelley
- Overview of Master Class 42 – Andrea Taylor
- Closing Remarks – Sarah Kelley and Vicki Rupp

**8:45** Adjourn Business Meeting

**8:45 - 9:30** Social

**9:30** End of meeting

## **2014-2015 Officers, Directors, and Standing Committee Members**

### **Officers**

Sarah Kelley (39) President

Taylor Watts (40, 8A) Vice President

Vicki Nichols (39) Treasurer

Pat Nelson (40) Secretary

### **Directors**

Andrea Taylor (38) Master Class & Lecture Series Director

Kate Powers (27, 8A) Assistant Master Class Director & Project Team Leader

Cynthia Abbot (39, 8A) Assistant Lecture Series Director

Greg Brockbank (15, 15A, 7A, 8A) Director-at-Large

Tamela Fish (39, 8A) Online and Social Media Director; Communications/Outreach Acting Director

Tish Brown (40) Membership Director

Taylor Watts (40, 8A) Events, Co-Director

Kathy Taylor (39) Events, Co-Director

### **Off-Board Positions and Standing Committees**

Kathy Cuneo (0, 7A) Coordinator Mentor

### **Board Development Committee**

Vicki Rupp (33)

Susan Rusche (24, 1A)



## Treasurer's Report

### Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2015

#### ASSETS

##### Current Assets

##### Checking/Savings

1445 BoM Checking	16,529.62	\$16,529.62
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5616 BoM Savings General		\$28,616.21
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5236 BoM Savings Educational		
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Joe Kohn Scholarship	\$7,500.00	
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5236 BoM Educational Savings	\$8,571.76	
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Total 5236 BoM Savings Educational		\$16,071.76
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PayPal Account		\$(53.10)
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Total Checking/Savings		\$61,164.49
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Total Current Assets		\$61,164.49
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<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>\$61,164.49</b>
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#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

##### Equity

Retained Earnings		\$64,247.05
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Net Income		\$(3,082.56)
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Total Equity		\$61,164.49
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<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>		<b>\$61,164.49</b>
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## Proposed Budget for June 1, 2015-May 31, 2016

	<u>Budget</u>
<b>INCOME</b>	
<b>Operating Income</b>	
Interest Income	20.00
Dues & Donations	
Fundraising Initiative	25,000.00
Donations and Gifts	5,000.00
Membership Dues	<u>8,000.00</u>
Total Dues & Donations	38,000.00
Membership Events	
Annual Mtg. May	25
Holiday Party Dec	50
Total Membership Events	75
Outreach	
Outreach/Sponsorships	<u>500.00</u>
Total Outreach	<u>500.00</u>
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	38,520.00
<b>Program Income</b>	
Master Class	15,000.00
Lecture Series	<u>3,500.00</u>
<b>Total Program Income</b>	<u>18,500.00</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>57,020.00</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>	
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	
Communications & Promotions	
Communications to Members	
Constant Contact Mailings	800.00
Membership Renewal	<u>600.00</u>
Total Communications to Members	1,400.00
Public Comm, Outreach & Mktg.	
General Publicity, Outreach, Events	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total Public Comm, Outreach & Mktg.	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total Communications & Promotions	2,400.00
Internal Expenses	
Board Development	250.00
Membership Events	
Annual Mtg. May 2016	650.00
Holiday Party Dec 2015	<u>600.00</u>
Total Membership Events	1,250.00

## Proposed Budget for June 1, 2015-May 31, 2016 cont.

Public Events	
Outreach/Sponsorship Event	<u>300.00</u>
Total Public Events	<u>300.00</u>
Total Internal Expenses	1,800.00
Overhead expenses	
Program/Organizational development	25,000.00
Administrative support	3,000.00
Insurance	1,950.00
Membership Database & Website	
Memberclicks Hosting	3,750.00
Memberclicks transaction fees	550.00
PayPal Monthly Fee	380.00
Paypal transaction fees	<u>320.00</u>
Total Membership Database & Website	5,000.00
Office Supplies & Stationery	500.00
P.O. Box Rental	100.00
Postage	60.00
Small Equip/Computers	600.00
Software	200.00
Special Recognitions	300.00
Storage	1,075.00
Taxes	70.00
Telephone	<u>270.00</u>
Total Overhead expenses	<u>38,125.00</u>
Total Operating Expenses	42,325.00
Program Expenses	
Lecture Series	
Facilities	1,800.00
Honoraria	400.00
Materials	100.00
Publicity & Recruiting	2,500.00
Marin TV	<u>1,800.00</u>
Total Lecture Series	6,600.00
Master Class 42	
Publicity & Recruiting	1,000.00
Program Expenses	<u>5,500.00</u>
Total Master Class 42	<u>6,500.00</u>
Master Class 43 Prep/Publicity	
Publicity & Recruiting	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total Master Class 43	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total Program Expenses	<u>14,100.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>56,425.00</u>
NET ORDINARY INCOME	<u>595.00</u>

## Proposed Revision to Bylaw, ARTICLE VII, 5. Board Development Committee

### 1. Elections.

The Nominating Committee shall present nominations for the Officers and Directors to be elected at the Annual Meeting. Such nominations shall be made available to all Members with the notice of the Annual Meeting with the candidate's consent.

### 2. Vacancies.

- a) Any vacancy in an elected directorship may be filled for the remaining unexpired term by nomination of the Nominating Committee and majority vote of the Board. Any vacancy in an appointed directorship may be filled by a majority vote of the Board. If a vacancy occurs in the Presidency, the Vice President shall fill it.

### *Nominating Committee*

- a) *Composition.* The Nominating Committee shall consist of four members: one Board member (no more than one person from the Executive Committee excluding the President) and three non-board members.
- b) *Term of Office.* All members of the Nominating Committee shall have one-year terms.
- c) *Appointment.* The incoming President shall name the Chairperson no later than the first meeting following the annual meeting. The Nominating Committee chair shall select the remaining members of the committee and report its composition to the board no later than the second meeting following the annual meeting.
- d) *Eligibility.* Members of the Nominating Committee are limited to two consecutive one-year terms on this committee.
- e) *Duties.* Provide a slate of Officers and Directors to be submitted to the Members at the Annual Meeting.

Any board or general member may make suggestions of potential candidates but it will be the function of the Nominating Committee to contact and interview candidates at their discretion.

No later than the end of February each year, the Nominating Committee will check personally with each sitting board member and determine who will be continuing with their term. This will set the number proposed to comprise the board for the following year and set the number of seats that will be needed to fill the board with that number.

The Nominating Committee shall bring their proposed slate of candidates the board no later than the March meeting preceding the annual meeting. The board does not vote on the slate but recommends that it be put before the general membership for consideration at the annual meeting.

Click on the link below to review the current Environmental Forum of Marin Bylaws.

[https://efm.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/environmental%20forum%20bylaws\\_approved%202013.pdf](https://efm.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/environmental%20forum%20bylaws_approved%202013.pdf)

## **2015-2016 Slate of Officers and Directors**

The Board and the Board Development Committee respectfully submit the following members as nominees for the slate of Officers and Directors for the Environmental Forum of Marin, for a term of service starting June 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016:

### **Officers**

Vicki Rupp (33) President

Kathryn Olson (41) Vice President

Pat Nelson\* (40) Secretary

Sally Wilkinson (41) Treasurer

### **Directors**

Andrea Taylor\* (38) Master Class 42 Director

Ann Bauer (41) Lecture Series Director

Susan Rusche (24, 1A) Development Director

Kim Rago (38) Membership Director

Susan Bierzychudek (40) Marketing-Communications Director

\*continuing from 2014–2015

## **2015-2016 Off-Board Positions and Standing Committees**

Sarah Kelley (39) Strategic Plan Advisor

Greg Brockbank (15, 15A, 7A, 8A) Nominating Committee Chair

Karen Mendelow Nelson (38) Master Class 42 Assistant Director

Open – Master Class 42 Project Coordinator

Open – Master Class 42 Recruitment Coordinator

Open – Lecture Series Assistant Director

Open – Outreach–Media Director

## Supporters for 2014-2015

### Key Supporters

Terry Atkinson and Kathy Taylor

Kathy Cuneo

Nona Dennis

Lynn Horowitz

Susan Rusche

### Supporters

Leslie Alden

Sarah Kelley

Pam Reaves

Nancy Bell

Lamar and Marti Leland

Katie Rice

Ed and Nancy Boyce

Brenda Maclean

William Ring

Gary Brand

Ginger Souders-Mason

Barbara Rothkrug

Tish Brown

Cindy and Craig Morris

Barbara Thornton

Priscilla Bull

Stephanie Moulton-Peters

Marsha Torkelson

Bob Bundy

Pat Nelson

Kathy Turner

Roger Duba

Marilyn Norman

Ken Waldeck

Diane Fruin

Ellen Obstler

Sandra Wallenstein

Heather Furmidge

Barbara Mary O'Grady

Jan Alff Wiegel

Claire Horn

Loretta Oremland

Barbara Winter

Bettina Hughes

Maria Pelletier

Karen Hyde

Maryann Rainey

### Key Volunteers

Database management: Susan Rusche

Lecture Series support: Nancy Bell

Web support: Bruce Bell

## Directors' Reports

### Master Class Program 41

**Andrea Taylor (38), Director**

**Kate Powers (27, 8A) Assistant Director and Project Team Lead**

#### Master Class 41: Module 1

##### Master Class 41's Graduates and Their Projects

Jayni Allsep	School Bus Challenge 2.0 - Reducing traffic congestion by increasing bus ridership for Reed School
Ann Bauer	EFM Lecture "Threatened Oceans: Damaged Habitat and Plastic Pollution"
Nessa Brady	Water Catchment - Systems study including Mill Valley Public Library and home design and install
Eva Buxton	No Professional Dog-walkers in Sensitive Plant Habitat - on Middle Ridge in Tiburon
Michelle Cox	Straws Upon Request - Reduce volume of straws distributed by Marin County restaurants
Kathie Gaines	EFM Lecture "Building Community: Food Security"
Heather Itzla	Straws Upon Request - Reduce volume of straws distributed by Marin County restaurants
Tesfaye Johanson	Sister City Project with Eliwaha, Ethiopia
Alex Kahl	Marin Civic Center Watershed Restoration
Aurora Mahassine	Marin Civic Center Watershed Restoration
Dan Monte	Marin Civic Center Watershed Restoration
Jonathan Logan	EFM Lecture "Building Community: Strengthening Marin on Earth Day"
Cheryl Longinotti	Walk Friendly Corte Madera - By applying for community recognition, increase short trip walking/biking
Claire McAuliffe	Local Sea Level Rise - Studies and actions by local jurisdictions
Vera Meislin	Advising/Revising Eco-Council at Marin Academy
Alicia Montesa	Marin SEL (School of the Environment) Program Elevation
Kathryn Olson	Study and foster issue-focused corporate and environmental organization partnership/alliance
Mary O'Mara	EFM Lecture "Building Community: Food Security"
Susan Simpson	Expand Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program in Marin - To include all police stations and pharmacies
Melinda Stone	Star Route Farm purchase for continued sustainable farming and community agricultural education center
Nancy Vernon	Public Outreach Campaign in San Anselmo for MCE's Deep Green 100% Renewable Energy Option
Jill Whitebook	Implementation of Tarp Law in Marin County
Sally Wilkinson	School Bus Challenge 2.0 - Reducing traffic congestion by increasing bus ridership for Reed School

## **Master Class 41 Scholarships**

The Forum offers two scholarships to students wishing to attend the Master Class. These scholarships honor two stalwart Marin County proponents of land use management and habitat protection.

Individually, these men fought at the front lines of several countywide efforts over the years to save land from development and restore critical eco-systems. Collectively, they raised awareness among decision-makers and the public about the importance of defending the environment.

### **Joseph Kohn Memorial Scholarship**

Joseph Kohn (34), a self-described "flaming environmentalist," was an active member and tireless supporter of the Environmental Forum of Marin and the California Native Plant Society. Before he passed away in January 2010, he guided Environmental Forum students on walking explorations of natural habitats, native plants, and waterways. Always a compassionate advocate on the subject of correcting eco-system damage wrought by human inattention and behavior, Joe's dedication to all environmental concerns inspired dozens of Environmental Forum students. He attributed his public speaking skills to his advocacy training as a member of Master Class 34. An annual memorial scholarship was created to honor this beloved member with funds he bequeathed to the organization so that other "flaming environmentalists" could follow in his stead.

The scholarship covers full Master Class tuition for a student who has demonstrated leadership qualities in protecting the lands and ecology of Marin County. Recipients are selected on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to the environment and sustainability, their past experience serving as a role model for other environmental advocates, their collaborative skills, and past accomplishments.

### **Joseph A Kohn Scholarship Recipient 2014**



**Ann Bauer**, Naturalist and Educator

Ann retired as Director of Education for The Marine Mammal Center. During her 23 years there she developed and taught the Center's educational programs for thousands of school children and for the public including youth volunteer opportunities, adult docent programs, and special programming for under-served students. Ann has collaborated for the Center with Pier 39 by coordinating exhibits, programs and events related to the sea lions ever since their arrival in 1990. She was a consultant with the Aquarium of the Bay to develop the Sea Lion Center that opened in December 2013. Ann was born and raised in Marin. She has a BS in Natural Resources Interpretation and a bilingual multi-subject teaching credential. She served in the Peace Corps in Honduras and Paraguay. She has also served on the boards of the Environmental Education Council of Marin, SEED, and Cultural Connections. She enjoys volunteering with the California Native Plant Society, gardening, hiking and caring for her family.



### **The Jerry Friedman Environmental Action Committee Scholarship**

Each year, the Environmental Action Committee offers a full scholarship to enable a West Marin resident to attend Environmental Forum of Marin's Master Class training program for environmental activists. The scholarship is a tribute to environmentalist and veteran Marin County Planning Commissioner Jerry Friedman. Prior to his death in 1999, Jerry and others concerned about increasing development pressures on rural West Marin founded the Environmental Action Committee. He served as its first Executive Director in 1971. A long-time resident of Point Reyes Station, Jerry worked alongside the founders of Environmental Forum of Marin and the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, laying the foundation for a legacy of local environmental protection, the creation of Point Reyes National Seashore, adoption of A-60 zoning in agricultural areas, and the establishment of the original Marin Countywide Plan. Throughout his life, he was a respected and valued voice of balanced growth, environmental quality, and collaborative City-County decision-making.

**Jerry Friedman Environmental Action Scholarship Recipient 2014:** No recipient this year.

### **Acknowledgments / Class Coordinators and Supporters**

The Master Class program is supported and made possible by the significant contributions of many volunteers. Whether brainstorming timely topics or firming up speaker commitments, our founding members, Board members, and graduates worked side-by-side with scientific experts and community leaders to ensure the success of our education programs. Without the generous involvement of these numerous volunteers, who shared their ideas, time, and commitment to sustaining the world in which we live, we could not have produced the Master Class.

We extend deep, and truly heartfelt, appreciation for their help.

#### **Master Class 41 Classes and Coordinators**

##### **Orientation**

Class Coordinators: Kathy Cuneo (0, HL), Kraemer Winslow (30), Andrea Taylor (38)

##### **Critical Thinking**

Class Coordinators: Heather Furmidge (34) and Mary Morgan (40)

##### **Geology and Watersheds**

Class Coordinator: Sita Khufu (39)

##### **Plant Communities and Baylands**

Class Coordinators: Kathy Cuneo (0, HL) and Nona Dennis (0, HL)

##### **Agriculture and Mariculture**

Class Coordinator: Phyllis Faber (0, HL)

### **Rethinking Waste and Toxics**

Class Coordinator: Renee Goddard (40)

### **Civics and Planning**

Class Coordinators: Nona Dennis (0, HL) and Kate Powers (27, 8A)

Panel Moderator: Maureen Parton (23)

### **Participation and Advocacy**

Class Coordinator: Kraemer Winslow (30)

### **Advocacy Speeches**

Class Coordinator: Kraemer Winslow (30)

## **Other Contributors to the Success Of Master Class 41**

### **MC 41 Project Review Team**

Kate Powers (27, 8A), Heather Furmidge (34), Tish Brown (40)

The Review team read project proposals for goals, scope, and timelines within the Forum's framework

### **MC41 Project Mentors**

Maureen Parton (23), Diane Griffeath (39), Melisa Williams (37)

The Mentors read project proposals for content and suggested resources and contacts.

### **Video Photography**

David Fix (30)

### **Still Photography**

Jocelyn Knight (36)

### **Website Maintenance**

Bruce Bell (7A)

### **Graphic Art Support**

Gayle Marsh (39, 6A)

The success of the Master Class is only possible through the active participation of a strong support base. I would like to thank Kate Powers for her clear vision and invaluable contribution as the Assistant Program Director; Heather Furmidge, Kate Powers, Tish Brown, Maureen Parton, Diane Griffeath and Melisa Williams for their guidance and support on the Projects; Kraemer Winslow for her continued support as a presentation skills trainer; Tamela Fish for her contribution in keeping us abreast of social media; the coordinators, without whom the production of weekly classes of this caliber would not be possible; and last, but not least, Sarah Kelley, our President, for her trust and support of incorporating new concepts into the creation of Master Class 41.

## **Lecture Series 2015**

**Andrea Taylor (38), Director**

**Cynthia Abbott (39), Assistant Director**

The Lecture Series 2015 was designed to build on the success of past seminars and lectures that the Forum has offered. The Lecture Series is considered to be Module 2 for the Master Class 41 participants, but is also designed to attract the public and thereby attract increased viewership of the Forum work. The topics of the lectures are designed to focus on serious issues that are facing not only Marin but also the world in general.

The Lecture Series program this year focused on the impact of climate change and how it is shaping many local dimensions in Marin, from freshwater availability, to the current state of the oceans, to renewable energy and vulnerability assessments, to food security and building community.

### **The Lecture Series 2015: MC41 Module 2**

#### **The Lecture Series 2015 Schedule and Coordinators**

##### **Drought: Water: Is there enough?**

Coordinator: Pat Nelson (40)

##### **Drought: Local Water Use and Re-Use**

Coordinators: Alex Kahl (41) and Aurora Mahassine (41)

##### **Threatened Oceans: Tipping Points**

Coordinator: Vicki Nichols (39)

##### **Threatened Oceans: Damaged Habitat and Plastic Pollution**

Coordinators: Ann Bauer (41) and Sarah Allen

##### **Climate Disruption: Vulnerable Marin**

Coordinator: Nancy Bell (37, Lecture Series A) and Yanna Badet

##### **Climate Disruption: Is 100% Renewable Energy Possible?**

Coordinator: David Kunhardt

##### **Building Community: Food Security**

Coordinators: Kathleen Gaines (41) and Mary O'Mara (41)

##### **Building Community: Strengthening Marin on Earth Day**

Coordinators: Renee Goddard (40) and Johnathan Logan (41)

## **Thoughts for Next Year**

The Environmental Forum of Marin must move away from its reputation as the "best kept secret in Marin."

### **The Master Class**

The Master Class bloomed with a diverse student body this year, and it would benefit from including more minorities and attracting a younger demographic. The reduced number of classes made the Master Class accessible to many, and that format should remain in place for at least three years for efficiency and continuity. Grounding Master Class participants in the environmental science basics of Marin County, through presentations and the Forum's field trips, along with Critical Thinking and Advocacy training seemed to be a successful way to capture the essence of Master Class in a pared-down Module 1. The Module 1/Module 2 format was also successful because it exposed a larger audience to environmental subject matter and to the Master Class. This format should remain in place for continuity.

### **The Projects**

Projects are an important component of the Master Class experience, an opportunity to put new thinking into action through experiential learning. The purpose and goal of projects this year was not only to engage Master Class participants in an active role, but also to provide cohesion to the group as the participants moved from the secluded format of Module 1 to the broader, looser format of the Lectures in Module 2. Learning about, and to some extent supporting, each other's efforts helped the group to know each other more intimately. There is more thinking to be done on how the Project component and the Lectures Series module meet the goals of the overall intended Master Class program experience.

### **The Lecture Series**

The Lecture Series was successful in attracting an average audience size of 82 people each lecture. Of those, an average of 31 people are new, non-members each lecture. That number is more than the average number of students we have in each yearly Master Class, and is a large factor in increasing our visibility as an organization. Therefore, I recommend that the Lecture Series continue as either a 6 or 8 session program. The topics must continue to stay as current and relevant as possible.

## Membership

### **Tish Brown (40), Director**

The Membership Committee works to perpetuate the Forum through the involvement and contributions of its community. The community consists of Forum graduates as well as non-graduates who contribute to the activities of the Forum (for instance, speakers, people who attend lectures).

As of April 1, 2015, the only people eligible for membership are graduates. In early December 2014, we sent hard-copy membership renewal letters to the 278 most active of the more than 1000 graduates. In early 2015, Susan Rusche, our invaluable database pro, sent two renewal reminders, one of which was also addressed to 533 graduates who have not recently renewed their memberships. The reminders highlight the excellent series of eight lectures produced from January through April, and the fact that members attend for free.

Our Current membership numbers include 130 individuals, 10 families (20 members) and 15 Life Members, totaling 165 people. We expect that number to increase before the end of the fiscal year.

Strategies for enhancing and perpetuating membership involvement include

- Maintaining the very high standard of Forum activities, from Master Class 42 to the 2016 Lecture Series.
- Revisiting policies regarding eligibility for Forum membership.
- Continuing cultivation/community-building activities such as the Holiday Party, Master Class reunions.
- Increasing Forum board and non-board participation in support of Forum efforts, thereby widening involvement and capacity – i.e., recruiting volunteers.
- Ascertaining that the Forum website is member and non-member friendly.
- Optimizing communication through media: social media, website and other means.

## Online and Social Media and Communications/Outreach

### **Tamela Fish (39), Director and Acting Director**

Online and Social Media Director is a technical role supporting Environmental Forum of Marin programs and mission. The director is responsible for delivery of a social media plan and manages the organization's external communication resources. The purpose of online and social media is to provide low cost outreach to a wide and diverse audience while maintaining control of brand and message. Social Media offers bi-directional communication and has been proven to be an effective agent of change. Digital communications provide documentation of ideas and events. Outreach is achieved through marketing strategy and maintaining good relationships both on and off-line.

### **Overview of Accomplishments**

Environmental Forum of Marin displays our event photos, Lecture Series flyers, topical news, events, and provides a channel for public comment via our:

Website: <http://www.marinefm.org/>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/forum\\_marin](https://twitter.com/forum_marin)

Linked In: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-environmental-forum-of-marin>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MarinForumVideo>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Environmental.Forum>

Interactive Master Class Facebook Groups for Classes 39, 40, and 41

Approximately 20-100 sources are monitored for sustainable news to be shared with our students, members, and public fans. News articles are headlined with neutral framework and posted on a public Facebook page or in a closed Master Class Group. We increased our page Likes from 293 to 531 Likes from April 2014 to April 2015. Our top performing post was March 5<sup>th</sup>. A photo of a mailbox buried in snow with a note reading, "*Hey California we found your missing water, please come get it, Signed New England*". It reached 4,444 people with a combined total of 449 Likes, comments, and shares.

In April we posted an article about George Lucas and housing that reached 154 people. Each Lecture Series flyer received approximately 200-350 combined views on social media and 200-300 combined views via e-distribution. In 2015 emphasis was placed on inviting in a new audience via social media and raising awareness. Environmental Forum of Marin received 4 Marin IJ article mentions during the Lecture Series and added over 50 new names to e-distribution database.

The 2015 Lecture Series was filmed by Community Media Center of Marin and will be provided both on YouTube and aired on television. Lecture Series Assistant Director, Cynthia Abbott, did an excellent job interfacing with CMCM for event set up and delivery of product. Student produced videos are also shared when appropriate and we are creating lists of recommended viewing for our YouTube channel. Video is an important tool. It will be important to designate budget for video in the future.

Social media overview and training was offered to the Board and Master Class 41.

The director monitors the public interfaces and responds to messages. Master Class students are invited to openly post content and discuss in closed groups. Graduate administrators are invited to provide content. Master Class representatives Patricia Nelson and Alex Kahl also provided Facebook content in 2014/2015.

**Online communities are collaborative.** Andrea Taylor, Kate Powers, Cynthia Abbott, Nancy Bell, and Sarah Kelley were instrumental to producing communications. Successful Master Class and Lecture Series marketing requires team effort. The team delivered well.

Patricia Nelson, Gayle Marsh, and Cynthia Abbott are dependable hard-working media team members and essential to long-term repetitive projects. Their tireless dedication is greatly appreciated.

Master Class students, Dan Monte, Alex Kahl, Kathleen Gaines, Heather Itzla, Jill Whitebook and others showed significant enthusiasm and finesse with online media during the year. Social media is a multifaceted channel and buy-in from the student community creates a better environment. Master Class 41 shows great media skills.

**In Summary,** Environmental Forum of Marin maintains a strong online presence and is known both locally and internationally through our social media via:

- Supporting educational programs, recruitment, membership, and events
- Maintaining a consistent brand, voice, and presentation style for Environmental Forum of Marin
- Promoting awareness through email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, the Neighborhood, various online calendars, and news agencies
- Securing photo and video media for promotion of organization and distribution

Environmental Forum of Marin is ready to introduce webinars.

Defined process and structure are important to marketing our programs.

Strong and accurate messaging of climate topics continues to be a strong attribute of our organization. It will be important to maintain our strong knowledge set moving forward.

Online media requires budget, but can also play a greater role in supporting fundraising efforts.

## Development and Events

### Taylor Watts, Kathy Taylor

We have had considerable success this year in development by touching more of our members and graduates.

Our development efforts have focused on the growth of dynamic programs and services, internal and external communications and cultivating relationships. Members and donors respond to dynamic organizations and programs. Those programs must first be communicated to our constituency through media and other outlets. The relationships that are formed as a result are then cultivated through our events. This is exactly what we have done over the course of this year (see below for examples).

#### - August 26, 2014

Kate Powers & Andrea Taylor

*Master Class 41! - Our Core Mission!*

#### - September 9, 2014

Co-Chairs: Kathy Taylor & Taylor Watts

*Event: The Forum Throws a "Pre-party" for the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Bioneers*

Sponsored by Kathy Taylor

After a successful Forum Social at the Marin Community Foundation in April, we decided to engage our most active constituents with an opportunity to meet and greet the most influential group in media for the environment: the Founders, Executives and key leaders of the Bioneers. The Bioneers are the TED Talks of Environment and Social Justice.

Attendees included: GIANTS in the environmental movement, Founders of the Forum, Bioneers and others: Martin Griffin, M.D., Nona Dennis, Phyllis Faber, Kathy Cuneo, Huey Johnson, Kenny Ausebel, Nina Simons. Notables included Kate Sears, Jim Wood, Katie Rice, Stephanie Moulton Peters, Damon Connolly, Greg Brockbank, Osprey, and major donors of the Bioneers.

#### Stats:

- Approximately: 90 people attended
  - Invitations sent:
  - 150 Master Class Graduates
  - 80 Bioneers
- 2 Email reminders were sent from the Forum
- 3 Email reminders were sent to Bioneers



## **- October, 2014**

Tamela Fish

*Press: Pre- and post-press coverage of the panel event*

Forum received pre-press and post-press for the panel event. Thank you, Tamela Fish of the Forum, Dorothee Royal-Hedinger and Hamilton Ink of the Bioneers for exceptional outreach and communications!

## **- October 14, 2014**

*Press: Bioneers conference comes to San Rafael*

Pre-panel Article Mark Prado

[http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci\\_26728316/bioneers-conference-comes-san-rafael](http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_26728316/bioneers-conference-comes-san-rafael)

## **- October 19, 2014**

*Collaboration with Bioneers, Environmental Forum and MarinLink: Sarah Kelley, Jamison Watts, Mary O'Mara, Nancy Boyce, Steve Kinsey, Josh Fouts*

*Panel at the Bioneers: A New Vision for Marin County: Our Successes, Challenges and Opportunities.*

The panelists were Nona Dennis, Congressman Jared Huffman, MALT Executive Director Jameson Watts, broadcast journalist and candidate for Oakland City Council Dana King, and moderated by Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey. Co-sponsored by MarinLink, the Environmental Forum of Marin and the County of Marin.

*Event: Post-Panel Social*

Sponsored by Taylor Watts

The Bioneers, Environmental Forum and MarinLink hosted a wine gathering following the panel.

Stats:

- Approx. 200 people attended
- Considerable Social Media Contact
- 3-4 emails were sent to 800+ Master Class Graduates

The Bioneers extended two very special offers for Forum Members and Graduates: discounts on the conference and on California Climate Leadership, a pre-conference event.

Post-Panel Article Marin IJ (see below)

**- October 19, 2014**

*Press: Bioneers conference in San Rafael addresses countywide sustainability plans*

Post Panel Article Megan Hansen

[http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci\\_26759877/bioneers-conference-san-rafael-addresses-countywide-sustainability-plans](http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_26759877/bioneers-conference-san-rafael-addresses-countywide-sustainability-plans)

**- November, 2014**

*Master Class Projects Team*

Kate Powers, Heather Furmidge, Maureen Parton

**- November 13, 2014**

*Master Class Event: Rebels with a Cause at the Buck Institute*

Mary O'Mara

Attendees included Founders: Nona Dennis and Kathy Cuneo, most of Class 41, approximately 15 MC Graduates, current and former Board Members, and special guests of Mary O'Mara and others.

**- December 16, 2014**

*Holiday Party*

Andrea Taylor and Sarah Kelley

**- January, 2015**

**Lecture Series begins!**

Lecture Series Press:

<http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20150112/environmental-forum-of-marin-to-discuss-drought-at-san-rafael-meeting>

Editorial: Coverage of Victoria Bogdan's commissioned artwork depicting Marin: What Might Have Been: <http://www.marinij.com/general-news/20150112/editorial-well-worth-remembering>

**- February, 2015-present**

*Victoria Bogdan's commissioned artwork depicting Marin: What Might Have Been, is currently showing at the Dominican Library.*

Article in the IJ:

[http://www.insidebayarea.com/bay-area-news/ci\\_27258197/new-website-shows-how-marin-could-have-developed](http://www.insidebayarea.com/bay-area-news/ci_27258197/new-website-shows-how-marin-could-have-developed)

Website: [www.whatmighthavebeen.squarespace.com](http://www.whatmighthavebeen.squarespace.com)

**- April, 2015**

Continuing the relationships built last year: We recently had a meeting with the Bioneers, MarinLink and the County of Marin representatives to discuss the 2015 Bioneers panel. This is the second year the Bioneers have graciously offered the Forum a local panel opportunity at the influential National Bioneers Conference.

## Rationale for Creating a More Inclusive Organization

On February 9, 2015, the Strategic Planning Workgroup on Inclusiveness and Membership met to finish its part of the proposed plan. As a part of that meeting, the group discussed all of the reasons why it now makes sense for the Environmental Forum of Marin to become a more inclusive organization and to depart from the membership model that has existed for more than 40 years. It is well understood that this will create many changes and that some of them may not be embraced by all of the current members, but the group believes it is time to move forward and here's why:

1. The Forum is no longer sustainable as an organization. It has become increasingly more difficult each year to attract people to serve on the board and as a result the few people willing to keep the organization going are getting burned out. With the only source of board and committee members being the graduates, there are not enough people with the skills needed to do the Forum's work.
2. The long-term trend in membership has been declining despite the best efforts to effect renewals.
3. The way in which the organization operates has changed considerably over the past decade. In order to keep up, the Forum needs people with sophisticated skills to effectively handle databases, social media, bookkeeping, communications, and web presence. The proposed addition of a paid administrative position will help, but the organization simply doesn't have the resources to pay all the professionals necessary to do the work. Expanding membership will give the Forum the ability to draw from talented people in the community.
4. The success of the Lecture Series during the past few years has created a need to provide a way for all the people who have attended to be a part of the Forum. Each lecture produces a few requests for membership. And, more and more people are visiting the website and wondering how they can contribute and/or join.
5. The value of membership in the Forum has often been the special feeling that comes with being part of a unique, shared experience. There will still be a graduate membership only open to people who have graduated from a Forum program. People who want to support the Forum's activities and programs will be able to join as general members (with higher dues and more limited benefits).
6. Inclusiveness is going to allow the Forum to spread its knowledge of environmental issues to a bigger audience and this will help further the Forum's mission.