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Dear MarinWatch

The Sierra Club has reviewed the MarinWatch website referenced by Point Reyes National Seashore: http://web.me.com/bubzine/MarinWatch.org/Current_Issues.html. The maps on the website purporting to describe the history of agriculture in PRNS contain errors so significant and uniformly biased against PRNS that they deserve immediate withdrawal from the website. In our opinion, the MarinWatch maps are clearly intended to mislead viewers away from Marin County's historic complicity in destroying ag in Marin by falsely attributing the effect of Marin's own policies to PRNS. In fact PRNS's efforts to protect ag have been more successful than Marin's.

The 1980 GMP defined a pastoral zone in PRNS of 24,687 acres, yet current permitted grazing acres are 28,064, or 3377 more acres than permitted in 1980. In stark contrast, County jurisdiction lost 2522 ag acres between 1990 and 2002 alone to urban conversion. This County jurisdiction figure does not include ag acres lost 1980-1990 or from 2002 -2009, or ag acres lost 1980-2009 to non-agricultural uses permitted under County jurisdiction (e.g. equestrian use or LucasFilm use or Buck Center use, or non-profit retreat use, etc).

The MarinWatch maps mislead viewers away from the County's own complicity in destroying ag acreage in Marin by ignoring well-documented history. *"At the end of the 1950s, [Marin's] political establishment typified the 'growth machine,' with government closely integrated with real estate and business associations, all pursuing development as the epitome of progress and the harbinger of prosperity...In 1966, a freeway revolt changed the future of Marin "*(<http://juh.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/34/1/38.pdf>).

The County's own pro-growth policies affected private ranches soon to be acquired by PRNS, most of which were either out of business when purchased, or about to go out of business due in part to pressure from ag acres taxed at urban rates. In many cases, the acquisition by PRNS saved agriculture from the County pressure. Nonetheless, the MarinWatch maps misleadingly imply that PRNS caused every ag acre lost in what is now PRNS despite the fact that most of these ag losses are due to the County or family decisions, not PRNS decisions. The errors throughout the Marin Watch are not random, but rather are so consistent that they clearly document bias:

- Giacomini Ranch MarinWatch map erroneously claims PRNS acquired the Giacomini Ranch and shut down the dairy. In fact, PRNS purchased the ranch from willing sellers for the purpose of wetland restoration, thus it was the sellers, not PRNS that shut down the ag operation. Furthermore, this ranch was not part of the Spanish ranching history and was created by damming the bottom of Tomales Bay, in response

to a WW II food shortage. The PRNS purchase returns the ranch to its longer history as a wetland. The MarinWatch maps, astoundingly, ignore the fact that this hugely popular project created one of the largest coastal wetland restorations on the Pacific Coast that is key to endangered salmon habitat and water quality in Tomes Bay. Does MarinWatch propose that PRNS regain the ag acres by demanding the money back from the Giacomini family, re-hire the bulldozers to put back the dams, un-do the restoration, put back in the manure holding ponds, and restore private cattle grazing where egrets probe and leopard sharks now bask?

- New Albion Ranch MarinWatch maps erroneously implies that PRNS removed ag from New Albion Ranch at Pierce Point (the Elk Reserve). In fact, per 1994 publication "Ranching on the Pt Reyes Peninsula", the dairy operation ceased in the early 1960's, while PRNS purchased the ranch almost a decade after economic pressure from the County's legacy of pro-growth anti-ag policies eliminated the ag. Congress then designated this area as wilderness to protect the elk (1976 PL 94-576, 94-389). Does MarinWatch propose to evict the elk so that public lands can be grazed by private cattle rather than native ungulates?

- D Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneously claim that PRNS removed ag from D Ranch. That would come as a surprise to PRNS ranchers Nunes and Spaletta who took over D ranch when the Horicks could no longer continue. PRNS removed only 200 steep lightly grazed acres for riparian protection around Horseshoe Pond. Does MarinWatch propose undoing this riparian buffer to re-graze the steep acres?

- E Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneously claim that PRNS removed agriculture from E Ranch. That would come as a surprise to the Nunes ranching family in PRNS who currently graze E-Ranch

- F Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneously claim that PRNS removed agriculture from F Ranch. That would come as a surprise to the PRNS rancher Evans, who grazes north of SFD and Gallagher who grazes south of SFD. Gallagher's grazing of F Ranch is profiled on the MALT site: www.malt.org/about/profiles/index.php?item=moore_ranch

- K Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneously claim that PRNS removed agriculture from K Ranch. That would come as a surprise to the Evans ranching family in PRNS who currently graze K Ranch

- N Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneously claim that PRNS removed agriculture from F Ranch. That would come as a surprise to the MacDonald ranching family in PRNS who currently graze N Ranch

- Wilkins Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneously claim that PRNS put the Wilkins Ranch out of operation since 1995. However in "A Good Life" pg 82 (1995), Livingston contradicts himself: "*Dairying at the ranch ended in the mid-1960s when Carnation, the San Francisco creamery to which the Wilkins milk was sold, was bought by a Texas company and the milk contracts in the area cancelled.... Faced with skyrocketing taxes (reportedly from \$1,200 per year in the early 1960s to \$22,000 in 1969) and low production at the ranch, the Wilkins family decided to sell.*" Two owners and a decade after pressures from the County's pro-growth property taxes and from the Carnation corporation removed ag, PRNS acquired the Wilkins Ranch. At the time PRNS staff moved into the ranch, the former tenant had let historic buildings decay, had let un-

restored creeks on the Ranch continue to dump sediment into the Lagoon and was using the public's 1350 acre ranch as a private horse preserve. Ranches, including the Wilkins Ranch, around Bolinas Lagoon were acquired by NPS to restore the Lagoon's watersheds and remove the sedimentation threat to Bolinas Lagoon identified by the Phil Williams Report on the County's Bolinas Lagoon website. Does MarinWatch propose to re-privatize this ranch and reverse the watershed preservation that will put Bolinas Lagoon back at risk?

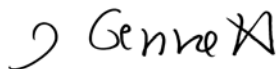
- Truttman The MarinWatch maps erroneous claims PRNS removed ag from the Truttman Ranch. That would come as a surprise to the Stewart ranching family in PRNS who graze the Truttman Ranch.

- Lupton Ranch The MarinWatch maps erroneous claims PRNS removed ag from the Lupton Ranch. That would come as a surprise to the Stewart ranch family in PRNS who graze the Lupton Ranch.

The Sierra Club support the PRNS policy of encouraging other ranchers in the pastoral zone taking over abandoned ranches (e.g. Lupton and D) to maintain the PRNS agricultural base. In contrast, we point out that neither MarinWatch or Marin County supported recent Marin Countywide Plan proposals to require proactive ag easements when McMansion proposals threaten ag production, nor did Marin or MarinWatch comment on ag in the Sonoma General Plan update even though Sonoma is a much larger contributor to Marin ag vitality than PRNS. In fact, PRNS historically and currently has been more successful and proactive in protecting its ag land than Marin County.

Given all of the above errors and bias, it is clear that the MarinWatch website is intended appeal to the prejudice and emotion of the uneducated public to pile onto "the usual PRNS suspects." The maps intentionally mislead readers away from Marin County historic pro-growth pressures on ag and its current unwillingness to confront property rights advocates lobbying to increase the value of the "final crop" at the expense of ag. Such misinformation not only does not contribute to healthy "Community Conversations," but actively (and we believe intentionally) subverts healthy conversation.

Sincerely,



Gordon Bennett. Sierra Club Marin Group, Agriculture Chair