



S O N O M A C O U N T Y
AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keene Named General Manager of Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

Board appoints interim District head as permanent

SANTA ROSA, Calif. – The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, serving as the District’s Board of Directors, late today named Bill Keene as General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. Keene has served as interim head of the District since April, when former General Manager Andrea Mackenzie stepped down after nine years.

“Our board is committed to continuing Sonoma County’s tradition of land preservation and natural resource protection,” said Paul Kelley, Fourth District Supervisor, and chair of the Board. “We feel that Bill has the right combination of vision, leadership, and history of serving the community, to advance the District during this time of change and opportunity. We look forward to the continued good work of the District.”

In addition to guiding the District’s acquisition activities, Keene will be focused on stewardship of the nearly 8,000 acres currently held by the District, of which many are awaiting transfer to Regional and State Parks. An integral part of these efforts will include interim access plans for those properties, such as the recent plan for Taylor Mountain, while they await transfer to park management agencies.

“Despite these challenging economic times, I could not be more excited and optimistic about the District’s future,” said Keene. “We have a committed board and constituency, a talented staff, and we are one of the top conservation organizations in the country. The District is well-positioned to help lead the discussion on how to best implement land conservation and agricultural preservation statewide.”

Keene joined the District as an Assistant General Manager in July 2008. He was integral in the development of the organization’s Strategic Plan which outlines specific initiatives and actions for the next five years. Prior to joining the District, Keene served as program manager for the Water Agency’s Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Program in Sonoma Valley. The program, the first of its kind in Sonoma County, was rated one of the top programs in the state for funding.

Additionally, Keene has extensive experience building partnerships throughout the region with water agencies, municipalities, business interests, agricultural groups, non-profits, and other organizations in the areas of water resources, natural resources management, land use planning, climate change, integrated regional water management planning and watershed management.

“Bill’s leadership during this interim period has fostered an environment of collaboration,” said Ralph Benson, Executive Director of the Sonoma Land Trust, a key non-profit organization that partners with the District. “This approach benefits the conservation community and Sonoma County, and will ultimately prove successful in the preservation of the best of what remains of Sonoma County’s natural heritage.”

About the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District permanently protects the diverse agricultural, natural resource and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations. Since 1990, the District has protected 163 properties totaling 75,364 acres. Agricultural and open space lands have been protected through a 1/4-cent sales tax approved by voters in 1990 and reauthorized in 2006. For more information, please visit www.sonomaopenspace.org