



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2010

Contact:

Peggy Flynn

Community Relations Manager

[Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District](#)

707.565.7347 office

707.293.4592 cell

District Recommends \$2 Million for Urban Open Space Projects

Board approves matching grant funding to cities and non-profits

SANTA ROSA, Calif.—Four projects totaling nearly 50 acres that will preserve open space and provide public access opportunities in urban areas throughout Sonoma County, were approved for funding yesterday by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, acting as the District's Board of Directors, as part of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's 2009-2010 Matching Grant Program.

The projects recommended for funding include:

- Acquisition of an additional 11 acres for a community park in southwest Santa Rosa
- Acquisition of .17 acres to expand a community park in northeast Healdsburg
- Habitat restoration of more than 28 acres of the Laguna de Santa Rosa
- Public access and site improvements to enhance a 6-acre community garden and park in Sonoma

In addition, the District was directed to return to the Board regarding the Paula Lane acquisition project in western Petaluma, if it is determined that additional funding beyond the \$1 million grant recommended by the District in the 2008 grant cycle is necessary.

"Protecting open space in our urban areas is as important to a thriving community as clean air, jobs, and schools," said Valerie Brown, First District Supervisor. "These projects will help ensure a healthy environment and increased access and educational opportunities for our residents."

Since 1994, the program has provided nearly \$29 million in funding to cities, the County, and non-profit organizations for land acquisition and restoration and development projects within and near incorporated areas of the County. It is provided for in the District's voter-approved Expenditure Plans in Measures C and F, which guide the District's use of funds. Funding for the program is based on available sales tax revenues, and as the District anticipates an approximate 14 percent decline in its revenue for FY 09-10, the program is budgeted at \$2 million or 13% of its total revenues for the year.

-more-

“The Sonoma Ecology Center, like other non-profit organizations, is acutely aware of the changing landscape of our economy and subsequently, funding opportunities for land conservation projects,” said Richard Dale, Executive Director of the Sonoma Ecology Center, and co-applicant of one of the recommended projects. “By joining together with our partners and creating regional projects, we are able to make a greater impact for our community.”

The 2009 Matching Grant Program kicked off last September with a public workshop and revised program guidelines. The District received six eligible applications totaling more than \$6.5 million in requested funding, which were considered by the Urban Open Space committee—an ad hoc group of the District’s Citizens’ Advisory Committee. Five projects were recommended by the Committee—two for partial funding, two for full funding, and one for an additional award of up to \$100,000.

In 2008, the District recommended \$6.6 million for a total of seven matching grant projects. Previous projects include the Town Green in Windsor, the Prince Memorial Greenway in Santa Rosa, and the 250-acre expansion of land along the Petaluma River for public access and habitat enhancement adjacent to Schollenberger Park, and protection and restoration of Patterson Point beach along the Russian River west of Monte Rio.

“We recognize that these projects are essential to the quality of life in our urban communities,” said Bill Keene, General Manager of the District. “By funding this innovative program and working closely with our partners, we are able to continually realize the intent of Sonoma County voters.”

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 more than 83,000 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

###