



FOR PUBLIC REVIEW PRIOR TO COMMUNITY MEETINGS

ALL CONTENT WILL BE REFINED BASED ON REVIEW BY THE PUBLIC AND PARTNERS

INTRODUCTION

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District has been developing the Vital Lands Initiative for the last year. The Vital Lands Initiative is a comprehensive vision for land conservation in Sonoma County, and is informed by the best available science and data, as well as robust community outreach and engagement. The following represents a draft of the “core content” of the Ag & Open Space District Vital Lands Initiative - including Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Performance Measures. This core content identifies the prioritized work of the District through 2031 and beyond. This material will be embedded into the printed plan, and will be the foundational information on the Vital Lands Initiative website. This core content is informed by and reflects the District’s enabling legislation and expenditure plan, District staff experience and input, past District plans and policies, input from multiple community and partner meetings, one-on-one interviews, community wide polling, and guidance from technical experts and the District’s Advisory Committee and Fiscal Oversight Commission. The Ag & Open Space District is providing the core content in advance of a series of community meetings in October to receive input from the public regarding the information included below.

Following the Board-led community meetings in October, the core content will be integrated into a more final draft plan with supplemental material, such as District and County background, trends in our work, FAQ, a more detailed glossary, etc. This draft plan will be distributed for public and partner review in early November, with another round of community input sessions taking place throughout the month to hear input on the draft plan. A joint meeting of the Fiscal Oversight Commission and the Advisory Committee will take place on November 16, with the public invited to provide input to those two bodies. In early December, the District’s Board of Directors will consider the draft plan and hear community input regarding the Vital Lands Initiative. Based on the direction of the Board in December, Ag & Open Space District staff will further refine the plan, with the intent of bringing the final Vital Lands Initiative to the Board in January.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Criteria: In order to map goals, criteria were developed to establish what places or features on the land are included in a map priority areas for conservation actions. These criteria are based in science and available data, and can be updated as needed in order to most accurately reflect the best available information. An example of a criteria is “Is part of a high quality shrubland.”

Data Overlay: VLI relies on a variety of datasets (spatial and otherwise) to support decision making and planning. The Priority Conservation Areas provide the foundation for guiding the District’s work throughout the County, but additional data overlays are required to answer specific questions or address certain values not captured in PCAs (which can be a result of incomplete or spotty data, data that does not impact an entire goal, or other information that is only relevant in some cases). Where this data overlay shows high value for a particular conservation value, actions could be identified for implementation in this space. An example of a Data Overlay is information showing important land for wildlife movement, which may trigger additional restrictions on fencing.

Goal: Goals are the primary outcomes toward which land conservation efforts and actions are directed in an organization. Goals for Ag + Open Space will often be integrated to achieve a “multiple benefits” effect. An example of a Goal is to “Protect a diverse system of productive agricultural lands in Sonoma County.”

High Quality: When describing certain conservation values, there is a need to create a continuum of value based on factors such as health, functionality, productivity, or other important landscape features. Ideally the highest value lands are the “best of the best”, within a given criteria according to established scientific or peer reviewed criteria. Definitions of quality are derived from various datasets, such as vegetation type, complexity, or patch size.

Performance Measures: Performance Measures provide the metrics to document the degree to which the District is achieving a particular objective. Performance Measures may be qualitative or quantitative, but must provide the ability to gauge success, trend direction, or completion. They include a variety of metric types, including land-based (acres of land acquired or stewarded), financial (dollars spent or leveraged), or social (number of people engaged/educated/within walking distance of District protected land). Performance Measures may be associated with a timeline, typically work through 2031, but in some cases where urgency is required an earlier timeline may be established. Performance Measures will be used to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of strategies employed to achieve an objective, and (2) to communicate the District’s progress and success in achieving its goals. They will be updated and reported out on as part of the annual/biennial Work Plan process, and used as needed intermittently. An example of a performance measure is “Percent of Sonoma County residents who are aware of the District “ or the “Number of acres protected.”

Priority Conservation Area: Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) are the places on the landscape with the highest conservation value, based on the application of conservation criteria, best available science and data, and internal/expert evaluation. These represent the “best of the best” identified for conservation, and do not factor in the current protection status of a property. PCAs do, however provide another tool that the District can use to review earlier projects, and evaluate their impact. PCAs can stand alone, or may overlay each other or other important and relevant data that is not a PCA (such as special status species information or wildlife corridor data - see “Data Overlay”), in order to identify places where multiple benefits are achieved. PCAs are intended to help provide the land conservation community a shared view of the landscape and the values it provides. Some PCAs include a range of values from 1-10 (eg, wetlands), whereas others are either “in” or “out” (eg, agriculture).

Objective: Objectives are the actions the District will take in order to achieve the goals identified by VLI. Objectives are differ from goals in that they are measurable and specific. Objectives are also the basis for measuring performance in reaching a goal. Once objectives are identified, one or more strategies are developed for achieving them. An example of an objective is “Increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture in Sonoma County and the District’s role related to agriculture.”

Strategy: Strategies are the “hows,” not the “whats.” A strategy considers the current context and trends, and addresses how the District should best achieve the objective, given current conditions (e.g., data availability, climate trends, local, regional, or statewide policy, funding trends, or polling data). Strategies may be reported on using Performance Measures, but are not necessarily quantifiable and do not include a timeline for completion. Actions necessary to implement the Strategies will be defined in District Work Plans. An example of a strategy is “Develop data to accurately portray biodiversity across the county.”

Work Plan: Every year the BOD will be presented with a document which outlines future work to be completed and progress updates for ongoing work, along with the annual/biennial budget. This document will link the objectives, strategies, and performance measures outlined in the Vital Lands Initiative to on-the-ground work, and specific tasks to be carried out by staff.



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AG + OPEN SPACE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to achieve the District's mission, a suite of principles is used to guide all aspects of the work. These principles provide the foundation for the ways in which the District conducts and completes its work, across programs and across goals:

Principle 1: Focus on the permanent preservation of land to protect specific, identified conservation values identified in the District's voter approved legislation

- Use conservation easements as the primary tool for land conservation
- Ensure all District acquisitions are designed and conducted to permanently protect identified and prioritized purpose for conservation
- Ensure long term stewardship of District-protected land protects conservation values and achieves goals and objectives
- Strive to achieve a mutually beneficial balance among agriculture, greenbelts, natural resources, scenic character, and seek opportunities to provide public access, recreation, and urban open space
- Ensure connectivity of protected lands to protect and enhance conservation values

Principle 2: Use best available information to make decisions

- Use the best available science and data to identify, prioritize, and protect land
- Assess previous work of the District and others - integrate lessons learned from challenges and successes into future work
- Be flexible and adaptive to integrate new information, changes and trends
- Provide high quality publicly available conservation data for the region

Principle 3: Utilize taxpayer funds responsibly and transparently

- Ensure fiscal and operational responsibility and transparency
- Maintain functional fiscal and operational capacity
- Protect the long-term fiscal health of the organization
- Strive for continuous improvement in organizational efficiency and effectiveness

Principle 4: Communicate, engage, partner, collaborate to accomplish the District's mission

- Engage with the community on a regular and substantial basis to gather input and share information
- Cultivate positive relationships with the community, including easement landowners, neighbors, and partners
- Maintain and strengthen communication and collaboration with conservation partners in order to provide synergistic benefits to county and community
- Seek opportunities to coordinate conservation efforts in order to achieve broad, mutual, countywide benefits



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UNIVERSAL OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In addition to the goal-specific objectives, strategies, and performance measures outlined in the following sections of this plan, some aspects of the District's work span all of the goals outlined by the Vital Lands Initiative. The following are "comprehensive" or "universal" objectives, strategies, and performance measures which cross multiple goal areas.

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or "how" to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
COMP-OBJ-01 <i>Increase the quantity and quality of land protected by the District</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize acquisition of conservation easements on lands with exceptional conservation value or multiple conservation values 2. Ensure that new conservation easements thoroughly and carefully identify conservation values and put in place enforceable provisions and restrictions that, if adhered to, would be expected to improve quality of CE land over time 3. Prioritize projects which meet multiple objectives, primarily by identifying and protecting places where two or more PCAs would benefit from a single action 4. Prioritize connectivity, proximity, and adjacency as criteria for protection in those landscapes whose conservation value is enhanced by connectivity, or proximity to similar landscapes, and perform analyses as needed to determine specific rankings or values of projects. 5. Evaluate and update the acquisition ranking process to reflect the data, goals, and priorities established by the VLI 6. Evaluate and update the stewardship manual to reflect the data, goals, and priorities established by the VLI 7. Report on the implications of a future "Stewardship Reserve Fund" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acres of permanently protected land countywide 2. Acres of District protected land countywide 3. Acres of District protected land in one or more PCAs 4. Completion of update to acquisition ranking process 5. Completion of update to stewardship manual
COMP-OBJ-02 <i>Maintain strong perpetual protection of land</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to meet Board of Directors' goal of monitoring each easement ownership unit every 12 to 18 months. 2. Enhance communication with easement landowners, and focus staff resources for monitoring visit follow-up, and increase resources to take action when violations are discovered or new permitted uses are requested 3. Utilize staff and contractors to complete baseline documents (including wildlife, vegetation, and hydrology), and integrate enhanced datasets (such as soil conditions and water quality) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of easement ownership units monitored once every 12-18 months 2. Percent of observed easement violations resolved within 3 years of discovery 3. Percent of permitted use requests processed within timeframe stated in conservation easement 4. Quantity of easements with incomplete or outstanding baseline documents
COMP-OBJ-03 <i>Proactively seek out and collaborate with willing landowners to accomplish the mission</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase communications with landowners whose properties have high conservation values, in order to provide information about ways these conservation values can be protected by the District (or others) 2. Expand outreach to landowners about the benefits of participating in the District's land protection program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of landowners contacted within PCAs to share information about those conservation values, about the District and about opportunities to work together 2. Total number of landowners contacted about the District and about opportunities to work together
COMP-OBJ-04 <i>Protect parcels adjacent to protected or high value parcels to be protected</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize protection of parcels with great value 2. Prioritize acquisition of parcels adjacent or proximate to protected lands or other high value lands. 3. Identify remaining high-conservation value areas constrained to small parcels or inholdings within larger conserved areas, and work with willing landowners to protect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acres of District protected land in one or more PCAs 2. Acres of District protected land in areas of high value and high parcel density (e.g. great value on small parcels)
COMP-OBJ-05 <i>Increase messaging and data development about "added value" of the District's work</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase messaging and outreach about the added values of the District's work (e.g. water supply or carbon sequestration) and the District's mission, including differentiating the District from SLT, RCDs, PRMD, etc. 2. Increase data and messaging materials regarding the economic value of maintaining scenic open space in the county 3. Develop data and identify strategies to protect changing landscapes due to climate change, and adopt policies to address impacts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of public who can explain the added values of the District's work 2. Percent of public who can connect the economic value of maintaining open space with the District's work 3. Number of messaging tools developed to share the "added value" of District work
COMP-OBJ-06 <i>Increase the accuracy, precision, and usability of information used to guide District work</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and revise District practices to optimize efficiency, incorporate best available data 2. Incorporate Vital Lands Initiative data into all prioritization processes at the District 3. Constantly maintain and update data and science available to District staff and partners for use in decision making (including vegetation, updated aeriels and maps) 4. Develop and deploy a "Data Central" system to better support decision-making capabilities and access to information at the District 5. Engage in regular and robust conversation with the community, gathering input across all aspects of the District's work by engaging in outreach activities at farmers' markets, community events and staff attendance at District outings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of update to stewardship manual 2. Completion of update to acquisition ranking process 3. Completion of a data central/integration system 4. Completion of update to community engagement strategy 5. Number of community events attended by District staff
COMP-OBJ-07 <i>Increase understanding of overall trends in Sonoma County and identify threats to District mission</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop data and resources available to staff to better understand development trends in Sonoma County, use this information to identify threats to the District's mission, and adjust prioritization of work based upon these threats (examples include extensive development, climate change, and illegal cannabis grows) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of a scientific, robust dataset to determine the development potential throughout the county



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<p>COMP-OBJ-08 <i>Maintain fiscal responsibility, maintain cost effectiveness, and increase transparency of District operations and fiscal status</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to use standard practices to complete annual budget and audit and make available on website 2. Establish Stewardship Reserve Calculation amount by 2022 to ensure long-term funding target to pay for perpetual stewardship responsibilities are met prior to the sunset of Measure F 3. Continue to implement 2012 Fee Strategy 4. Convey all fee interest of District-held fee properties, and retain conservation easements over each conveyed property 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updates to website to make budget and audit findings available 2. Completion of reserve calculation methodology, approved by the Board in 2018, investment strategy identified and initiated by 2020 3. Acres of fee land owned by District
<p>COMP-OBJ-09 <i>Increase efficiency in all District work</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure workload and the available resources are matched for maximum effectiveness 2. Implement agency-wide project management tool 3. Seek opportunities to evaluate and potentially use new tools, technology, and partnerships to accomplish the mission with increased efficiency and effectiveness 4. Streamline easement monitoring methodology by integration of ARCGIS Collector application and mobile devices for field data collection and report generation. 5. Share timelines for project completion with community and interested partners 6. Pilot a program designed to increase volunteer participation 7. Evaluate workload and available resources, and address gaps with permanent positions, extra help positions, volunteers, interns, or contractor services 8. Utilize highly effective project management tool, utilized across District programs, for planning and reporting progress 9. Continually evaluate ongoing processes at the District to ensure (1)institutional knowledge is maintained, (2) processes result in maximum efficiency and effective use of taxpayer dollars, (3) protocols are in place for updates to processes (e.g. management plans, contracting protocols, easement language, monitoring protocols, data/analysis protocols, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of hours of staff time per type of task (monitoring, project management, admin, etc.) 2. Number of overtime hours per type of task (monitoring, project management, admin, etc.) 3. Number of hours invested in volunteers compared to number of hours of work replaced by volunteers (ratio) 4. Complete evaluation of ongoing processes at the District
<p>COMP-OBJ-10 <i>Increase sustainability and climate change resiliency in all District work</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop standards and BMPs for carbon sequestration on District-protected land (including soil, forestry practices, and rangeland management) 2. Report out the carbon sequestration benefits provided by District (particularly at time of acquisition) 3. Develop a program to reduce the District's operational carbon footprint (including vehicle emissions, building performance and other infrastructure related impacts) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carbon sequestration values for District protected land 2. Average annual carbon dioxide emissions per person
<p>COMP-OBJ-11 <i>Increase outside resources available to District to effectively and efficiently carry out the mission of the District</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a strategic funding plan, including evaluation of methods to increase other sources of funding, (e.g. grants and legislation) 2. Leverage District tax revenue to secure additional outside funding for the benefit of the Sonoma County taxpayers 3. Evaluate the potential of local, regional, state, and federal programs (such as RAMP and RCIS) as possible acquisition and/or stewardship funding/tools for habitat protection 4. Increase recognition by partners and public of dollars leveraged by grants, discount sales, or other sources of outside revenue 5. Continually evaluate various types of easements or other land protection tools, mapping techniques and technology, data acquisition and stewardship, potential new or underutilized partnerships, funding opportunities,etc., and report via Work Plan on proposed/accomplished updates or changes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dollars from county tax 2. Funding from outside sources to support District goals 3. Resources invested into seeking alternative funding sources 4. Completion of work plan on an annual basis
<p>COMP-OBJ-12 <i>Increase the recognition, understanding, and approval of the District's work by the general public</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase visibility of District, including increasing media representation, new outreach materials, enhancing engagement with all demographics within Sonoma County such as Latino, youth, etc., re-developing the sign standards, and District branded clothing for staff and volunteers 2. Provide staff with messaging training, building upon the messaging guidelines developed for monitors 3. Expand newsletter content to include success stories involving existing CE landowners 4. Expand District messaging about the many important natural resources and water resources in our county, the impact they have on our day-to-day lives, and how protecting them benefits the community (including trends, multi-benefit nature of these lands, partnerships, targets on the land, etc.) 5. Increase connections with landowners, including providing information about the District's work 6. Increase public's understanding of District work by through outings and education programs that focus on the multiple benefits of land conservation, natural resources, and agriculture and the District's role in land conservation 7. Use public meetings and other forms of public engagement to provide background of important issues, educate the public about these issues, and a forum for input on decision making 8. Partner to promote opportunities for youth involvement in District initiatives 9. Expand youth environmental education programs to reconnect children to nature, and to support the next generation of conservation leaders through local educational opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of Sonoma County residents who are aware of the District 2. Percent of Sonoma County residents with favorable opinion of District 3. Percent of District-easement holders with favorable opinion of District 4. Percent of Sonoma County residents who support increasing efforts and spending on the protection of natural resources 5. Number of articles in local papers about District work 6. Number of visitors to District website(s) 7. Number of signs on District protected properties 8. Number of signs on District protected properties using current branding 9. Number of "landowner-focused" events 10. Number of landowners attending District events 11. Number of hours spent by youths (0-18 years) in outings program 12. Number of hours spent by participants in outings program



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<p>COMP-OBJ-13 <i>Where appropriate, increase access to District-protected lands</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase participation in outings program on District protected properties, with a focus on the work of the District and benefits of land conservation 2. Increase diversity in the pool of outings or education providers, as well as the diversity of the participants 3. Increase quantity and quality of information on District website and in printed documents about existing public access opportunities 4. Collaborate with partners to identify priority education and outings on District-protected lands and implement an updated education and outings program focusing on the work of the District and the benefits provided by land conservation 5. Update the current education and outings program, including development of District curriculum for recreation/access providers, highlighting the benefits of the District's work 6. Complete RFP process with a focus on new/diverse providers of outings/education 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of hours spent by participants in outings program 2. Percent of Sonoma County residents with favorable opinion of District 3. Percent of public who can explain the benefits of the District's work 4. Number of acres of District protected land open to the public 5. Number of messaging products designed to increase knowledge of the public about access to District protected land
<p>COMP-OBJ-14 <i>Increase volunteer engagement in all District activities</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand volunteer program in order to support recreational programs on District-held lands, to provide increased access, to assist with stewardship projects (e.g. invasive plant removal or habitat restoration), and to better protect the land from illicit activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of hours spent on District-protected land by volunteers
<p>COMP-OBJ-15 <i>Continue to develop and maintain positive relationships with easement landowners and fee land neighbors</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek input on how to enhance relationships with easement landowners and fee-land neighbors (e.g. survey, meetings, listening tour, etc.) 2. Maintain contact with easement landowners and fee land neighbors throughout the year (e.g. monitoring visit, newsletters, annual event, etc.) 3. Conduct survey/listening tour of District landowners, and take action to implement suggestions or adjust practices 4. Develop program to provide resources and information to easement landowners and fee land neighbors 5. Use points of contact as opportunities to identify easement landowner concerns and needs, and follow up by connecting landowner with additional resources (e.g. resources for outside funding, expert advice, etc.) 6. Develop landowner handbook to provide guidance on interacting with the District and identify resources (for example funding sources for landowners to implement restoration) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of District-easement holders with favorable opinion of District
<p>COMP-OBJ-16 <i>Increase public and partner understand of the economic value of conservation</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake additional analyses on the economic value of land conservation, and share findings broadly 2. Increase messaging around the return on investment when spending public dollars on land conservation 3. Complete research and outreach campaign related to economic value of land conservation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of Sonoma County residents with favorable opinion of District 2. Percent of public who can explain the benefits of the District's work
<p>COMP-OBJ-17 <i>Increase use of legislative avenues to advance the District's Mission and increase funding for District work</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop proactive legislative program with a list of identified outcomes at state and federal level, including policy and funding implications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete update to legislative program design
<p>COMP-OBJ-18 <i>Increase the impact of District partnerships in achieving the mission</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop formal partnerships to advance certain objectives, and define clear charters and roles 2. Continually expand the "pool" of District partners 3. Develop a relations management system in order to better leverage partnerships, contacts, and potential funding sources 4. Seek opportunities to jointly fund projects with other county agencies, such as with the Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Transportation Authority, and the Regional Climate Protection Authority 5. Develop a shared strategy with RP for overall outreach, outings, educational opportunities 6. Share data and resources with partners to influence best conservation outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of District initiatives with partners 2. Number of projects worked on in conjunction with partners 3. Completion of joint strategy with key partners for overall outreach, outings, and educational opportunities 4. Implementation of relations management system

In addition to the attributes and data listed for each Priority Conservation Area, the District uses additional data sets to refine the prioritization of land protection activities, and to document the co-benefits of land conservation. These datasets apply to all goals.

Dataset	Use
Development Threat	Overlay to show where land is most at risk of being developed
Proximity and/or adjacency to protected lands (connections to already protected lands)	Overlay to show where conservation values are close to protected lands



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AGRICULTURE | *Protect a diverse system of productive agricultural lands in Sonoma County*

Sonoma County agriculture is world renowned for its quality and diversity, as well as its innovative and sustainable practices. Although existing on the edge of the rapidly urbanizing San Francisco Bay Area, Sonoma County has retained its rural landscapes and working lands due to the economic viability of our productive agricultural lands and the active protection of these lands from development. Agricultural lands offer many benefits to the greater community, including jobs and revenue to the local economy as well as locally produced food and fiber. They also help to maintain open space, scenic views and greenbelts, protect aquatic ecosystems and groundwater basins, and provide habitat for native species of plants and wildlife.

Our Role in Protecting Agricultural Lands: The enabling legislation and expenditure plan direct the agency to protect agriculturally productive lands - primarily through the purchase of development rights from willing sellers. Agriculturally productive lands eligible for protection include working farms and ranches and other lands used for the production of food, fiber and plant materials (such as flowers), and the raising and maintaining of livestock and farm animals. There are thousands of acres of agriculturally productive land in Sonoma County - Ag + Open Space has identified all lands currently in agriculture as Priority Conservation Areas for agriculture, with the intention of refining these PCAs in the coming years in collaboration with the agricultural community and experts in agriculture.

Priority Conservation Areas (eventually will link to maps & methods)	Criteria	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
Cultivated Agriculture	Currently or historically cultivated land	Croplands data
Rangeland	Currently or historically rangeland	Rangeland data product derived from FMMP

Additional Important Data to be Considered as an Overlay with this Goal (with implications for specific strategies or objectives).

- The datasets in this table will be used to refine or add to Priority Conservation areas
- In many cases these data are spotty and incomplete, therefore they cannot be used in PCA development.
- In addition, we will use this table as a "parking lot" for future data work, with the potential to "rank" them (e.g. "currently in use," "incomplete coverage," "needs refinement" etc.).

Dataset	Use
Space between croplands (e.g. how connected are the croplands?)	Overlay to show where croplands are close to and/or connected to one another (regardless of protection status)
Space between rangeland (e.g. how connected are the rangelands?)	Overlay to show where rangelands are close to and/or connected to one another (regardless of protection status)

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or "how" to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
AG-OBJ-01 <i>Increase the amount of protected land that supports grazing</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Within "Rangeland PCA", prioritize acquisition of conservation easements on highest priority land for grazing Establish and maintain data and criteria to identify highest priority land for grazing operations Prioritize the protection of land that is in close proximity to another grazing operations Based upon "Rangeland PCA", develop an outreach strategy to encourage landowners protect their land with a conservation easement and/or increase awareness of the District's ag land conservation program Expand role of "Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee" (potentially add members outside of current Advisory Committee), and develop charter Work with experts to further refine what land is important for grazing operations, and map as a refined "Rangeland PCA" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of permanently protected land within the "Rangeland PCA" Percent of Sonoma County residents within "Rangeland PCA" with favorable opinion of District Complete charter for "Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee" Complete update to "Rangeland PCA" Number of project applications with a primary focus of agricultural lands
AG-OBJ-02 <i>Increase the amount of protected land that supports agricultural cultivation</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Within "cultivated Ag PCA", prioritize acquisition of conservation easements on highest priority land for cultivated agriculture Establish and maintain data and criteria to identify highest priority land for cultivated agriculture Prioritize the protection of land that connects two (or more) cultivated agricultural operations Based upon "Cultivated Agriculture PCA", develop an outreach strategy to encourage landowners protect their land with a conservation easement or increase awareness of the District's ag land conservation program Expand role of "Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee" (potentially add members outside of current Advisory Committee), and develop charter Purchase lands for sale that are identified as a high priority for cultivated agriculture and resell lands to farmers subject to a conservation easement (future <i>Work Plan Actions</i> might include using "lease to own," or auctions as tools for this strategy) Ensure geographic distribution of protected cultivated land 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of permanently protected land within the "Cultivated PCA" Percent of Sonoma County residents within "Cultivated PCA" with favorable opinion of District Complete charter for "Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee" Complete update to "Cultivated PCA" Number of acres (or properties?) purchased by the District and resold with conservation easement designed to maintain agricultural use Number of project applications with a primary focus of agricultural lands
AG-OBJ-03 <i>Ensure that District-protected agricultural lands stay in agriculture</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Build connections between ag easement landowners and farmers/ranchers looking for land to lease Connect agricultural landowners with resources that support viable agricultural operations (best management practices, grant funding etc.) Resell District owned agricultural lands to ag producers while retaining a conservation easement Connect existing or potential easement landowners with succession planning professionals Evaluate and develop tools for ag land conservation that best meet the interests of the District and the needs of the landowner (for example: affirmative easements, payments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete evaluation of affirmative agricultural easements Number of landowners contacted within the "Cultivated Agriculture PCA" and "Rangeland PCA" to share information about the District and District-supported BMPs Number of acres (or properties?) purchased by the District and resold with conservation easement designed to maintain agricultural use



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	<p>over time, connecting landowners with succession/estate planning experts, partner tools, right of first refusal, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support legislative influence for ag protection i.e. Williamson Act, SALC, ag mitigation, CAL Can, etc. Work with expanded “Agriculture Technical Advisory Committee” to produce messaging materials which explain the role of the District in ag, the tools available to the District, and distribute to landowners within ag PCAs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affirmative easements in place Number of acres under an affirmative easement Percent of Sonoma County residents with favorable opinion of District work in Ag Complete update to legislative program design
<p>AG-OBJ-04 <i>Ensure that high quality agricultural lands remain in agriculture</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to ensure District-protected land remains in food production Evaluate ag easements as a tool for keeping land in ag Design conservation easements that prohibit the conversion of properties to a non-agricultural use or uses not consistent with other conservation values Develop District policies that protect land from conversion away from agriculture (examples at this point in time might include tasting rooms, event centers or extensive farm stay operations, but this may change over time) Support legislative influence for protection of ag land Work with “Agriculture Technical Advisory Committee” to produce messaging materials which explain the role of the District in ag, the tools available to the District, and distribute to landowners within ag PCAs (including a discussion about how the District can help sustain local food production for the benefit of all county residents AND information about the role of the District) Develop messaging materials for the general public about the current state of agriculture and open space in the county, the trends in this space, and the District’s role in protecting both agriculturally productive lands and open space (including a discussion about the effectiveness of easements) Connect landowners who are interested in leasing surplus land with potential leasees 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of protected land available for food production (albeit, perhaps not actually be currently in food production) Percent of easements to fully restrict conversion to a non-agricultural use Adopt a policy to direct District how to address potential ag-land conversion issues Percent of Sonoma County residents with favorable opinion of District work in Ag Percent of Sonoma County residents with accurate understanding of District work in Ag Number of producers connected with landowners Number of easement holders leasing land to farmers or ranchers
<p>AG-OBJ-05 <i>Encourage management practices that support both agricultural productivity and healthy natural systems</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and protect sensitive natural areas on agricultural properties in a manner that is considerate of agricultural productivity Evaluate the feasibility of establishing specific baselines of the health of specific resources on a property, and monitor accordingly on a regular basis (e.g. soil and water quality) Increase resolution and accuracy of data used to represent lands that are important for agricultural productivity and provide habitat, water quality and supply, and other important natural resources Complete evaluation of the feasibility of additional baseline/monitoring requirements Develop policy for incentivising the enhancement of natural systems on District-protected properties (including the retention of CE proceeds) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of land protected that are critical for agricultural productivity and provide habitat, water quality and supply, and other important natural resources Complete update of monitoring and baseline reporting requirements Adopt policy for incentivising the enhancement of natural systems on District-protected properties
<p>AG-OBJ-06 <i>Increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture in Sonoma County and the District’s role related to agriculture</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand District messaging for the general public about the current state of agriculture and open space in the county, the trends in this space, the District’s role in protecting the broad range of benefits provided by agricultural land, and encouraging the continued use of land for agricultural production Increase resolution and accuracy of data used to represent lands that are important for agricultural productivity and provide habitat, water quality and supply, and other important natural resources Increase efforts to inform the community that local food production is an important component of our Urban Open Space program Develop messaging materials for the general public about the current state of agriculture and open space in the county, the trends in this space, and the District’s role in protecting both agriculturally productive lands and open space Develop comprehensive District “Agricultural Land Preservation Outreach Strategy” which addresses needs in communication collateral, community engagement, and education/outings on District protected lands Increase outings and education programs with an agricultural focus on District protected lands 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a messaging document about role of the District in ag Percent of Sonoma County residents with favorable opinion of District work in Ag Percent of Sonoma County residents with accurate understanding of District work in Ag
<p>AG-OBJ-07 <i>Ensure that the District’s efforts to protect agriculture are informed by the agricultural community</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Listening tour to gather insights from easement landowners and their neighbors Expand role of the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee, including supporting attendance at conferences and/or workshops that relate to agricultural issues and trends particular to ag land conservation Increase participation in ag community meetings, such as Farm Bureau, Farmers Guild/Community Alliance with Family Farmers, with the intention of gathering input in District ag priorities and identifying ways or working together Participate in existing efforts to support the local food system Increase participation with youth-oriented agriculture groups (such as high school ag programs, 4H, and FFA) Increase communications, shared initiatives, and data sharing with other agriculturally-focused entities in the county (including Ag Com, Farm Bureau, FG/CAFF, PRMD, CalCAN, SCFSA, etc.) Increase in participation in ag community meetings (CAFF/Farm Bureau etc.), and regular attendance to Farm Bureau meetings with the intention of gathering input in District ag priorities Increase the understanding in our community about the current state of agriculture and open space in the county, the trends in this space, and the District’s role in protecting both agriculturally productive lands and open space Complete a survey with Farm Bureau members, District ag landowners and others about the role of the District, to better inform strategies and Work Plan Actions Host a workshop for agricultural landowners (not necessarily District-protected lands) to discuss their perspectives on the District’s role 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete charter for “Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee” Number of hours spent by staff and/or members of “Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee” at conferences/workshops which relate to agricultural issues and trends particular to land conservation Number of presentations to Staff and to full District Advisory Committee about agricultural issues and trends particular to land conservation Number of hours spent by staff in ag-related community meetings and/or discussing with landowners on a “listening tour” Number of hours spent by staff developing initiatives and sharing data with other ag-focused entities Number of Farm Bureau meetings attended Number of Farmers Guild/Community Alliance with Family Farmers meetings attended Complete a survey and/or interview process with Farm Bureau/Farmers Guild/Community Alliance with Family Farmers members and District landowners Complete a workshop for ag landowners



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GREENBELTS | *Protect open lands that surround cities and communities within Sonoma County that retain the rural and open character of the county*

Sonoma County cities and communities retain their small-town character because of the open spaces between them – working and natural lands that act as greenbelts and community separators. These lands are home to: small farms and ranches that provide local food and a place to see farming from urban communities; rare plant and animal species, wetlands and stream systems, as well as important groundwater basins. These greenbelts are scenic, beautiful, and help communities retain their rural and open surroundings in this rapidly urbanizing region of California.

Our Role in Protecting Greenbelts: The enabling legislation and expenditure plan direct the agency to protect community separators and greenbelts to prevent urban sprawl, to retain the rural and open character of Sonoma County and to preserve agricultural use.

Priority Conservation Areas (will eventually link to maps & methods)	Criteria	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
Community Greenbelts	Is open space adjacent to or near communities based upon county Urban Service Areas (for communities that do not have a UGB)	Parcels adjacent to/within ½ mile of the Urban Service Area
		Parcel size
		% impervious
	Is open space adjacent to or within a half mile of an Urban Growth Boundary (for communities that have UGBs)	Parcels adjacent to/within ½ mile buffer of Urban Growth Boundary
		Parcel size
		% impervious
Is between Urban Service Areas and/or Urban Growth Boundaries	Parcels between cities (use Urban Growth Boundaries) and unincorporated areas (use Urban Service Areas)	

Additional Data to be Considered in this Goal		
Dataset	Use(s)	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
General Plan “Community Separator”	<i>For use in checking the extent of Greenbelt PCA maps is (generally) greater than the GP Community Separator area, and for communicating this overlap</i>	Presence of GP2020 Community Separators

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or “how” to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
GB-OBJ-01 <i>Increase the amount of protected land on the urban edge that maintains community identity, prevents urban sprawl, and promotes growth within existing developed areas</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within “Community Greenbelts PCA”, prioritize open space adjacent to established communities 2. Monitor public opinion of Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) and the land just outside the UGB 3. Work with cities to support their Urban Growth Boundaries 4. Develop a comprehensive strategy for District action to help maintain strong UGBs countywide 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of permanently protected land within the “Community Greenbelt PCA” 2. Percent of Sonoma County residents with working knowledge of UGBs 3. Percent of Sonoma County residents who support maintaining or tightening UGBs
GB-OBJ-02 <i>Increase the amount of protected land between communities that provide visual relief from continuous urbanization.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within “Community Buffer PCA”, prioritize acquisition of conservation easements that provide open space buffers between communities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of permanently protected land within the “Community Greenbelt PCA”
GB-OBJ-03 <i>Ensure that protected greenbelt lands enhance the quality of life for the community.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize projects that overlap the “Community Greenbelt PCA” and at least one other PCA 2. Prioritize projects that increase passive or low intensity recreational opportunities in the greenbelt, to allow for the complementary benefits of recreation and conservation values 3. Prioritize projects within a Greenbelt PCA that have direct sale opportunities (CSAs or Farmstands) 4. Prioritize projects that provide local farmers with access to land to produce food 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acres of land open to public recreation within the “Community Greenbelt PCA” 2. Acres of land in one or more Ag PCAs and within the “Community Greenbelt PCA” 3. Acres of land in one or more Scenic PCAs and within the “Community Greenbelt PCA” 4. Number of District-protected properties growing food within the “Community Greenbelt PCA” 5. Number of projects with direct sales of food in Greenbelt PCA(s)
GB-OBJ-04 <i>Increase public understanding about the importance of greenbelt protection and the important benefits the community realizes by protecting these areas</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand District messaging around the importance of greenbelts, particularly about the benefits they provide the urban areas they are near 2. Work with partners to develop shared initiatives to increase understanding of the importance of protecting greenbelts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of Sonoma County residents who support further protection of greenbelts 2. Percent of Sonoma County residents with working knowledge benefits provided by open space in the Greenbelt PCA



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NATURAL AREAS | *Protect the system of natural land and water resources that support the diverse ecology of Sonoma County*

Sonoma County is home to a variety of habitats and ecosystems that make it an international hotspot for biological diversity. Our unique natural landscapes include mountains, miles of undeveloped coastline, oak woodlands, rolling grasslands, tidal marshes, coastal forests, freshwater lakes, streams, wetlands, and vernal pools, as well as plant communities and species that occur nowhere else in the world. The varied nature of the Sonoma County landscape provides critical habitat for the many species of fish, plants, and terrestrial wildlife that live here. Additionally, these natural landscapes provide multiple benefits to human communities – including clean water, pollination for our farms, carbon sequestration and climate change resiliency, places to enjoy nature, and stunning natural beauty for the people of Sonoma County.

Our Role in Land & Water: Sonoma Ag + Open Space enabling legislation and expenditure plan direct the agency to protect natural ecosystems and habitats throughout the county - specifically sensitive biotic habitat areas and riparian corridors, including restoration and resource management for these habitats and ecosystems.

Priority Conservation Areas (eventually will link to maps & methods)	Criteria	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
Conifer and Mixed Conifer-Hardwood Forest	Is part of a high quality conifer or mixed conifer-hardwood forest (including redwoods, doug fir,)	Conifer map classes from fine-scale vegetation map
		Patch size of conifer forest
		Structure index (max/mean tree height, tree height variance, canopy density)
Hardwood Forest	Is part of a high quality hardwood woodland, including oaks, maples, buckeye,	Hardwood map classes from fine-scale vegetation map Patch size of hardwood forest
Grasslands	Is part of a high quality grassland	Veg map: Native & non-native perennial grassland macrogroup
		Veg map: California annual & perennial grassland macrogroup
		Veg map: Western dry upland perennial grassland group
		Native coastal prairie (data available for portion of County)
Shrublands	Is part of a high quality shrubland	Shrub map classes from fine-scale vegetation map
	Is part of a high quality coastal shrubland	Veg map shrubland within coastal zone
	Is part of a high quality serpentine shrubland	Veg map shrubland highly correlated with serpentine (Arctostaphylos (bakeri, montana) Alliance, Arctostaphylos viscida Alliance, Quercus durata Alliance)
Wetlands + Riparian	Is potential riparian corridor	Alluvial Floodplain extent
		Hydrogeomorphic riparian footprint
	Has current riparian vegetation	Patch size of riparian habitat
		Canopy density of riparian veg
		Canopy height variance of riparian veg
	Is part of a connected, functional network of streams	Fish passage barrier index (higher value to streams with no fish barriers, lower with small fish barriers that allow passage, and lowest fish barriers with no passage)
	Is part of a watershed with high integrity	Road density
		Road crossing density
		Percent impervious
		Percent ag
	Has wetland features	Percent natural vegetation cover
		Presence of vernal pools, freshwater wetlands, estuary, salt marsh, natural lakes
		Wetland size (consider size of wetland complex and/or to size of individual wetlands)
Has high recharge potential	Presence of vernal pool species or species status species	
	Recharge potential value (per O'Connor Environmental work - harmonizing countywide Basin Characterization Model recharge with high-resolution local groundwater studies, groundwater well logs, and stream baseflow estimates) Alluvial fans/fill valleys by area (based on CGS and USGS geology data and heads-up digitized from LiDAR DEMs/hillshade)	



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Additional Important Data to be Considered as an Overlay with this Goal (with implications for specific strategies or objectives).

- The datasets in this table will be used to refine or add to Priority Conservation areas (for example, including special status species in the Wetlands & Riparian PCA).
- In many cases these data are spotty and incomplete, therefore they cannot be used in PCA development.
- In addition, we will use this table as a “parking lot” for future data work, with the potential to “rank” them (e.g. “currently in use,” “incomplete coverage,” “needs refinement” etc.).

Dataset	Use	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
Large Trees	Important stands of “large trees” throughout the county	Tree size index (based on mean tree height, max tree height, biomass, variance)
Special Status Species	Overlay for prioritization and property-specific queries	CNDDDB - listed species rank (T&E and state rank)
		Presence of USFWS Critical Habitat / Spotted owl observation or activity center
		Presence of coho/chinook/steelhead per CalFish database/USFWS Recovery Plan data (ranked by # species present)
Wildlife Movement	Important lands for wildlife movement	Wildlife permeability metric
Habitat Diversity	Proxy for high habitat diversity	Vegetation community diversity by HUC14 watershed
		Topographic diversity - variance in elevation, slope, and aspect by HUC14 watershed
		Vegetation structural complexity (variance of tree height) by HUC14 watershed
Rare or Unique Vegetation	Has rare vegetation communities/habitats	CDFW vegetation rarity (state rarity 1-3) crosswalked with Veg map
		Presence of serpentine geology
	Presence of other “Locally rare or unique” veg communities per expert opinion	
Redwood Forest	Is part of a high quality redwood forest	Redwood tree height index (based on mean tree height, max tree height, and variance)
		Mean tree height within redwood veg map polygon
Oak Woodlands	Is part of a high quality oak woodland or oak savanna	Patch Size of Redwood Forest
		Oak map classes from fine-scale vegetation map
		Patch size of oak vegetation
Valley Oak	Is part of a high quality valley oak woodland	Patch size of hardwood vegetation
		Patch size of oak vegetation

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or “how” to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
LW-OBJ-01 <i>Protect high priority natural lands and water resources throughout the county</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within “Wetlands + Riparian PCA”, prioritize protection of riparian corridors and wetlands 2. Within “Forest and Woodlands PCA”, prioritize protection of forests and woodlands 3. Within “Grasslands PCA”, prioritize protection of grasslands 4. Within “Shrublands PCA”, prioritize protection of forests and woodlands 5. Based upon area defined in the “Wetlands + Riparian PCA”, develop an outreach strategy to encourage landowners protect their land with a conservation easement and to increase awareness of the District’s work on riparian corridor and wetland protection 6. Evaluate and identify potential riparian restoration projects on District-protected lands (including instream fish barrier removal) 7. Assess the feasibility of spatially explicit riparian easements 8. Complete an assessment of stream health on District protected lands, and identify strategies to improve District performance in protecting these areas (including stream surveys on key streams - salmonids, other species, Benthic macroinvertebrates, structure, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of permanently protected land within the “Wetlands + Riparian PCA” 2. Percent of permanently protected land within the “Forest and Woodlands PCA” 3. Percent of permanently protected land within the “Grasslands PCA” 4. Percent of permanently protected land within the “Shrublands PCA” 5. Number of habitat restoration projects in “Wetlands + Riparian PCA” 6. Number of habitat restoration projects funded (at least in part) by the District in “Wetlands + Riparian PCA” 7. Complete assessment of stream health on District protected lands
LW-OBJ-05 <i>Maintain high levels of biodiversity in Sonoma County</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize the protection of land with high biodiversity 2. Develop data to accurately portray biodiversity across the county 3. In places with high biodiversity, use easement language that specifically protects the qualities that allow for such diversity and develop baseline reporting/monitoring practices to ensure these qualities persist 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of projects with specific language to protect biodiversity



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<p>LW-OBJ-06 <i>Identify and prioritize protection and rehabilitation of those areas supporting special status plants or animals</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where special status species have been identified, ensure conservation easement language protect species (considering impacts of climate change as appropriate) 2. Where special status species have been identified, ensure land management practices protect species (considering impacts of climate change as appropriate) 3. Improve the accuracy of District data related to special status species protection, including fish passage, spawning areas, corridors of seasonal wetlands and aestivation areas for amphibians, and nesting areas 4. Increase District efforts to document presence of special status species on District protected lands, including documentation in site assessments, baselines, and monitoring reports 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of projects with specific language to protect identified special status species
<p>LW-OBJ-07 <i>Protect land most important for wildlife movement</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where wildlife corridors or important areas for wildlife movement have been identified, ensure conservation easement language and land management practices protect species 2. Complete outreach to landowners whose land is in the midst of key wildlife movement areas in order to promote best management practices for wildlife movement (for example, wildlife-friendly fencing) 3. Enhance District's ability to monitor large predator species on District protected lands using new tools and technology 4. Identify opportunities to connect fragmented habitats to increase wildlife permeability 5. Develop messaging campaign for landowners whose land is important for wildlife movement (including BMPs and ways they can work with the District to further protect their land) 6. Work with partners to use wildlife cameras and other technology to monitor large predator species on District protected land 7. Evaluate new or underutilized methods for connected fragmented habitats and work with partners to implement on District-protected lands 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of projects with specific language to protect identified wildlife corridors 2. Number of landowners contacted about important wildlife corridors on or near their property 3. Complete gap assessment of core habitat areas 4. Number of landowners contacted regarding potential to reconnect important core habitat areas 5. Number of images of wildlife captured using wildlife cameras
<p>LW-OBJ-09 <i>Encourage management practices which support or enhance the important natural resources on all District-protected lands</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use easement language which incorporates language about ensuring best practices are used for natural resource management 2. Use best available science and data to develop protocols for key land management practices on fee lands (including invasive species removal; vegetation management using prescribed burns, mowing and grazing; enhancing wildlife movement; preventing pathogen transmission, etc.) 3. Develop protocols for SOD protection across the county 4. Evaluate the ecological, legal, and risk implications for using fire as a management tool on District protected lands 5. Share information with District landowners about key land management practices (including invasive species removal; vegetation management using prescribed burns, mowing and grazing; enhancing wildlife movement; preventing pathogen transmission, etc.) 6. Partner with other organizations to document and track invasive species on District protected lands 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of easements with language regarding best practices for natural resource management appropriate to the property 2. Complete update of Stewardship manual with protocols for land management practices 3. Number of landowners contacted about key land management practices 4. Complete countywide assessment of invasive species 5. Number of acres of land covered by invasive species on District-protected land
<p>LW-OBJ-10 <i>Increase community involvement in stewardship of natural resources</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pilot a volunteer program that includes utilizing volunteer monitors to assist District staff in conducting monitoring of District-protected fee and easement properties, stewardship workday events, volunteer patrols. 2. Develop protocols for when to host public meetings or use other forms of public engagement (online surveys, e-blasts, etc.) to gather input from the public about Natural Resource issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of hours District volunteers spend on land stewardship and property patrols 2. Number of public meetings hosted to discuss natural resource issues 3. Number of other forms of contact made to discuss or share issues pertaining to natural resources
<p>LW-OBJ-11 <i>Increase restoration of habitat</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase understanding and documentation of areas within the county that are marginal but have potential to be high quality habitat 2. Identify potential restoration opportunities on current or potential District-protected lands, and link landowners to non-District funding to improve habitat conditions 3. Identify new funding sources for the District to utilize to increase restoration of habitat 4. Identify new or underutilized partnerships, and utilize them to leverage District dollars for restoration of habitat (including RAMP, other regional approaches) 5. Develop strategy to link District work with outside funding sources to better leverage District impact 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of identified potential restoration sites on District-protected lands 2. Dollars from outside sources used to restore habitat on District-protected land



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RECREATION | *Work with partners to provide recreational opportunities and trail linkages on District-protected lands that are consistent with conservation values*

Sonoma County is fortunate to have myriad places to hike, ride, play, and be outside – ranging from urban parks, open space preserves, and trails along the coast, to the bay, mountains, lakes, and our rivers and creeks. These recreational areas are managed within a vibrant system of city, county, and state parks, as well as open spaces managed by non-profit organizations. Ag + Open Space has protected almost 12,000 acres of land that is now available for public recreation, and owns nearly 4,000 additional acres which are poised to be transferred to a recreational partner. Ag + Open Space has purchased the land which now comprises many of our locally loved parks and preserves, including Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve, Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve, and North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. In total, Ag + Open Space has helped open 32 new parks and preserves for public enjoyment. In addition, Ag + Open Space has purchased land adjacent to existing parks and preserves (such as Hood Mountain Regional Park, Sonoma Coast State Park, and Annadel State Park), which expands the total lands available to the public in places that are already known and loved. Ag+Open Space supports recreation for a variety of reasons, including the continued protection of open space and agricultural values, education and outreach opportunities, and the general quality of life of Sonoma County residents.

Numerous studies have shown that access to open space and parks is foundational to physical and mental health - reducing medical costs for individuals and for society. More and more medical plans are offering incentives for their members to get outside and participate in outdoor activities. Sonoma County has historically had very limited publicly accessible lands. Since its founding, Ag + Open Space and its partners have been instrumental in increasing the amount of public land open for recreation -Ag + Open Space has a very specific and important role in this area, working with partners to create recreational and educational opportunities on lands protected for their conservation values.

Our Role in Recreation: Sonoma Ag + Open Space enabling legislation and expenditure plan state that protection of land may include the purchase of fee interests for outdoor public recreation where the public use would not be inconsistent with the open space designations listed for other goal areas. Priorities for recreation are identified by recreational partners whose mission is focused on public access and whose expertise includes planning and implementing public access projects. These partners include Sonoma County Regional Parks, California State Parks, cities, NGOs and agencies with responsibility for planning and implementing regional trails and recreational amenities. The recreational priorities identified by recreational partners are often conceptual in nature or included in longer term plans - thus Ag + Open Space has not mapped a specific PCA for recreation, but has provided a list of partner priorities and conceptual maps of trail alignments in the appendix. Ag + Open Space will work collaboratively with recreational partners to identify shared priorities that are consistent with protected conservation values per the enabling legislation. These shared priorities will be clarified and developed in detail during the annual work plan and budgeting period.

Additional Data to be Considered in this Goal		
Dataset	Use(s)	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
District Recreational Properties	Demonstrate current District funded recreational opportunities	Transfer status of District holdings, public access status
Current Local and Regional Trails	Show current local and regional trails	Local and regional trails (e.g. SCIPP)
Local and Regional Trail Conceptual Linkages	Show conceptual connections for local and regional trails, where the District would potentially considering adding a recreational component to a project	Local and regional trail plan conceptual alignment/direction/linkages
General Plan Designated Trails, Bikeways, and Waterway Trails	Show current and planned local and regional trails	Presence of GP2020 Designated Trails, Bikeways, and Waterway Trails

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or “how” to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
REC-OBJ-01 <i>Increase and enhance recreational opportunities, when consistent with the District Expenditure Plan and appropriate for identified conservation values</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop standards for including trail easements across private land, including easement language and partner contacts for assessing need Evaluate opportunities to overlap recreation and agricultural benefits, allowing for recreation and agriculture to co-exist where appropriate Analyze and identify strategies for recreation that has a low impact on conservation values Implement 2012 fee land strategy Establish guidelines for a “wilderness” approach to recreation and public access, including BMPs for low cost / low impact features Design Conservation Easements on recreational lands that ensure that recreational uses are compatible with the identified conservation values Develop a policy providing clear direction regarding recreational use and natural resource management, including criteria for lands suitable for recreation and/or public access, definitions for ‘passive’ recreation and ‘active’ recreation, definition of open space “preserve,” amount of development allowable in future projects (e.g. percentages of impervious surfaces), and direction about low cost/low impact approaches to providing public access Develop a list of recreational uses appropriate for to the District mission and for IPA/O&M funding in cooperation with local and regional partners (including Identify shared goals with rec partners and what the District’s role in and the potential for trail construction on District-held properties) Prioritize expenditure of Initial Public Access and Operation and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of miles of publically access trails open to the public on District-protected land Number of properties open to public recreation protected by the District Number of acres open to public recreation protected by the District Number of acres provide agricultural benefits and recreational benefits Number of miles of trail easements held by District Dollars spent on acquisition of rights related to public access Dollars spent on IPA / O&M Number of acres held in fee by District intended for transfer to recreation entity Dollars spent on low cost/low impact features Fully implement 2012 Fee Land Strategy District dollars spent to mitigate recreation-related impacts on natural resources Number of scenic vistas protected by the District Acres viewable from publically accessible District-protected land Percent of Sonoma County residents who support expanding the protection of scenic vistas and open space



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	<p>Maintenance funds on projects that are likely be opened to the public within 3 years</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Where appropriate, increase access to or views of scenic vistas, wilderness, farmland, unique natural features, etc. 11. Where feasible and appropriate, establish baseline data on factors such as wildlife use on District-protected lands prior to transfer or public access, to enable meaningful assessment of impacts and appropriate adaptive management responses 12. Establish a framework for assessing existing impacts of recreational uses and improvements (e.g. sediment, wildlife mvt) on District-protected lands 13. Work with partners to identify key scenic vistas lacking public access 14. Develop messaging materials (signage, handouts, etc.) utilizing access to scenic vistas to promote the benefits of open space 	
<p>REC-OBJ-02 <i>Increase public awareness of District contribution to recreation</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner to develop a map showing the recreational opportunities provided in part by the District 2. Develop messaging materials promoting the public to experience protected lands in low impact ways, with emphasis on leave no trace ethics 3. Increase messaging about District-funding recreational opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of Sonoma County residents who support District's recreational endeavors.
<p>REC-OBJ-03 <i>Increase recognition of District's role in protecting wilderness for conservation values and for recreation</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase clarity around recreational use compatible with resource management recommendations, and continue to strictly enforce any restrictions placed upon a property to protect the conservation values 2. Host workshop for rec partners to share findings regarding criteria for lands suitable for recreation 3. Engage experts who can give guidance on District-specific recreation issues, be ambassadors for District work, evaluate potential new tools, efficacy of current tools, and advice on outreach related to recreation 4. Form a "Recreation Technical Advisory Group" and develop a charter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of Sonoma County residents who identify District's role in recreation as being primarily about wilderness and low-impact access 2. Complete a charter for a "Recreation Technical Advisory Group" 3. Complete a definition of "wilderness" as it relates to recreation and public access 4. Number of acres of "wilderness" in recreation areas 5. Number of easements incorporating a "wilderness" designation 6. Complete a workshop for rec partners to discuss District role in recreation
<p>REC-OBJ-04 <i>Increase available trail connections consistent with conservation values</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilize "Offers To Dedicate" and trail easements with willing landowners to provide trail connections 2. Negotiate trail easements on projects which bridge gaps in current or planned trails 3. Prioritize trail easements with connectivity to existing networks and transit (for example, the SMART, or enhancement of existing 'rails-to-trails' alignments) 4. Develop standard language for trail easements for use with potential project partners 5. Develop list of partner contacts for assessing needs for trail connections 6. On projects where the District or partner obtains a trail easement, ensure that a specific trail alignment is included in the easement or stipulate a payment holdback until an alignment is identified 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miles of trail easements on District-protected privately held land 2. Miles of trail easements on all District-protected land 3. Acres of land protected which provides linkages for wildlife and for recreational networks
<p>REC-OBJ-05 <i>Increase public access to waterway trails and/or access to pull-outs for boaters</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with partners to identify key locations lacking access, and prioritize projects which provide access and protect conservation values 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of District-protected water access points
<p>REC-OBJ-06 <i>Engage the public in stewarding District-protected lands</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand volunteer opportunities for stewardship and restoration of recreation-related impacts on District-protected lands 2. Pilot a program intended to increase opportunities for volunteer participation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of hours volunteers spend on District-protected land 2. Number of acres of land District volunteers work to restore or maintain 3. District dollars spent to mitigate recreation-related impacts on natural resources



FOR PUBLIC REVIEW PRIOR TO COMMUNITY MEETINGS

ALL CONTENT WILL BE REFINED BASED ON REVIEW BY THE PUBLIC AND PARTNERS

SCENIC CHARACTER | *Protect lands that are essential to the unique open space scenic character of Sonoma County*

Sonoma County is one of the most beautiful counties in California – attractive to visitors and residents alike. Beauty and visual interest are provided by the diversity of topography, landscapes, and working and natural lands – as well as numerous unique scenic features such as mountains, sea stacks, and geologic formations – all of which combine to create a stunning backdrop to our daily. One can see mountains from every community, park, or road including Taylor Mountain, Fitch Mountain, Sonoma Mountain, Bennett Peak, Geysers Peak, and Mount Saint Helena. Ag + Open space plays an important role in the protection of these natural features that make Sonoma County so unique

Our Role in Scenic Character: enabling legislation and expenditure plan direct the agency to protect the areas of high scenic quality, scenic landscape units and scenic corridors, including natural landscapes and backdrops that provide visual relief from urban densities and maintain the open nature of Sonoma County.

Priority Conservation Areas (will link to maps/methods)	Criteria	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
Scenic Hillside (includes mountains and ridgetops)	Is highly visible and commonly seen in Sonoma County	Visible from highly traveled transportation corridors and General Plan Scenic Corridors and is open space (i.e. not developed but may be in private ownership/not necessarily protected by District)
		Visible from communities and is open space
Scenic Valleys	Is highly visible and commonly seen in Sonoma County	Visible from highly traveled transportation corridors and General Plan Scenic Corridors and is open space
		Visible from communities and is open space
Unique Places	Offers scenic views of unique places in Sonoma County	Offers views of coastline and is open space
		Offers views of waterways and is open space
		Offers views of mountains and is open space
		Offers views of unique geologic features and is open space
Gateways	Is at the nexus of major transportation corridors into and out of the County and Cities	Land closer to the nexus of major transportation corridors into the County is higher value
		Land closer to the nexus of major transportation corridors into cities is higher value

Additional Data to be Considered in this Goal		
Dataset	Use(s)	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
General Plan “Scenic Corridors” and “Scenic Landscape Units”	<i>For use in checking the extent of Scenic PCAs, ensuring it is (generally) greater than the GP Scenic Corridors + Scenic Landscape Units, and for communicating this overlap</i>	Presence of GP2020 Scenic Corridors
		Presence of GP2020 Scenic Landscape Units

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or “how” to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
SC-OBJ-01 <i>Increase the amount of District protected land which provides the scenic backdrop to daily life in Sonoma County</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize the acquisition of conservation easements on land which provides the backdrop to daily life in Sonoma County Design conservation easements that minimize visual impact of allowed structures and improvements, while allowing for evolving agricultural technology and infrastructure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of land protected lands within the “Scenic Hillside PCA” Acres of land protected lands within the “Scenic Valleys PCA”
SC-OBJ-02 <i>Increase the amount of District protected land which is important for preserving the unique character of the county</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize the acquisition of conservation easements on land which is important for preserving the unique character of the county Design conservation easements that minimize visual impact of allowed structures and improvements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of land protected lands within the “Unique Places PCA”
SC-OBJ-03 <i>Increase the amount of District protected land which provides the visual buffer between communities, and between neighboring counties</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize the acquisition of conservation easements on land which is important for preserving the scenic open space between communities Prioritize the acquisition of conservation easements on land which is important for preserving scenic open space at the boundary of the county 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acres of land protected lands within the “Gateways PCA”
SC-OBJ-04 <i>Increase public understanding of the multiple benefits of scenic open space</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase messaging around the benefits to quality of life that taxpayers realize as a result of scenic open space and the rural nature of the county Increase data and messaging materials regarding the economic value of maintaining scenic open space in the county Complete an economic analysis of scenic protections (land/home values, tourism income, etc.) Outreach campaign around quality of life benefits due to scenic qualities of Sonoma County, including development of 1-3 short messaging pieces explaining the District’s approach to protecting scenic landscapes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of SoCo residents who support expanding protections of Scenic resources Percent of SoCo residents who understand the connection between the District’s work and quality of life in Sonoma County



FOR PUBLIC REVIEW PRIOR TO COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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URBAN OPEN SPACE | *Work with partners to enhance urban open space in and near cities and communities in Sonoma County*

Sonoma County communities are committed to providing accessible open space to their citizens - recognizing that these areas create the character and vitality of a community and contribute to its beauty and sense of place. Additionally, urban open space is foundational to the health of urban residents – allowing people of all ages to get outside within a few minutes of their homes, often by walking out their front door. Ag + Open Space partners with multiple groups – including cities, community organizations, and non-profits – to provide matched funding for the development of urban parks, preserves, and open lands. Projects funded by Ag + Open Space include urban greens pace, habitat restoration, trails, athletic fields, urban parks and plazas, river access, skateparks, and community gardens.

Our Role in Urban Open Space: The enabling legislation and expenditure plan direct Ag + Open Space to support urban open space projects within and near incorporated areas and other urbanized areas of Sonoma County through a matching grants program, with preference given to acquisition and development projects that link communities. Because these urban open space projects are envisioned, planned and executed by partners, with only partial funding from Ag + Open Space, these priorities are not mapped and are instead identified, reviewed and funded on a regular basis per the matching grants program Board adopted criteria.

This goal will be revisited once the Matching Grant Program (MGP) guidelines have been drafted.

Priority Conservation Areas	Criteria	Attributes (i.e. datasets or data sources)
Urban Areas	<p>Is within the “urban areas” defined by District (includes cities and unincorporated Urban Service Areas plus smaller outlier communities, with a ½ mile buffer) <u>and</u> exhibits one or more conservation criteria per above</p> <p>Urban (or community) open space project are those projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire land that possesses or has the potential to possess one or more open space characteristics listed above • Restore or enhance natural resources/systems • Provide a scenic respite from the surrounding built environment • Provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation and education • Are open in nature (e.g. open to the sky) • Connect communities • Provide opportunities for agricultural activities 	<p>“Urban areas” (cities, Urban Service Areas, and select surrounding communities like Bloomfield or Jenner), with ½-mile buffer, and overlap with PCAs from other goals</p>

Objective (the outcome or result, qualitative or quantitative)	Strategy (the approach(s) or “how” to accomplish the objective)	Performance Measures Timeframes to be identified in annual work plans
<p>URB-OBJ-01 <i>Connect urbanized areas with open space and agriculture</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a competitive matching grant program on a biennial basis 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dollars expended within the “Urban Areas PCA” 2. Dollars associated with an expected match within the “Urban Areas PCA” 3. Dollars matched against District dollars within the “Urban Areas PCA”
<p>URB-OBJ-02 <i>Maintain a diverse portfolio of diverse urban open space projects throughout cities and communities within the county</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with partners to encourage a diversity of projects/locations (maximize the impact of the MGP) 2. Increase communication about the MGP, specifically with regard to benefits, impacts, and changes to the program 3. Gather input from the community about the effectiveness of the MGP 4. Develop, maintain, and continually refine criteria within the MGP that ensure that there is a balance of MGP projects across geography, partnerships, and demographics 5. Complete update MGP guidelines at least every other cycle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete update to MGP guidelines 2. Number of applications received for MGP 3. Number of applications received for MGP which meet the eligibility requirements 4. Number of projects awarded funding through MGP 5. Dollars awarded through MGP
<p>URB-OBJ-03 <i>Continue to protect conservation values in urban areas</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor MGP projects annually, with an emphasis on education of landowners and identification of potential negative impacts to conservation values 2. Monitor and enforce the agreements that result from MGP project, based upon the conservation values established at time of agreement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acres of protected lands within the “Gateways PCA” 2. Number of acres on projects funded by MGP