

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION & OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

William J. Keene, General Manager

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (District) is to permanently preserve the diverse landscapes of Sonoma County for future generations, including working farms and ranches, greenbelts and community separators between and around urban areas, natural areas and wildlife habitat, and land for public access and passive recreation.

Budget at a Glance:

Total Expenditures	\$35,643,324
Total Revenues	\$16,000,000
Total Net Cost	\$19,643,324
Total Staff	26.52
% Funded by Local Discretionary Funds	0%

DEPARTMENTAL DESCRIPTION

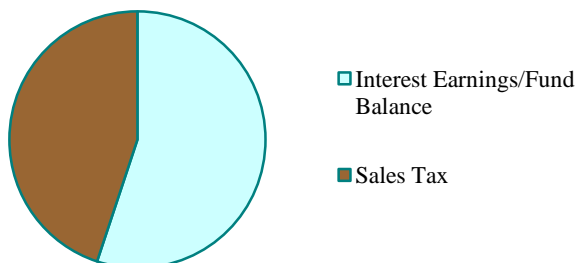
The Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (District) partners with willing landowners, public agencies, and non-profit organizations to permanently protect land from development, through agreements with landowners (conservation easements) and outright purchase of land. District acquisitions are guided by a long-range acquisition plan, "Connecting Communities and the Land," which reflects community desires and values and directs preservation to the highest priority farmlands, greenbelts, natural areas, and recreational lands. In addition, the District implements the Agricultural Resources and Open Space and Resource Conservation Elements of the Sonoma County General Plan.

In November 1990, Sonoma County voters approved Measures A and C to create a unique land protection agency, the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (District) and funded it with a quarter-cent sales tax to 2011. Since its inception, the District has protected over 85,000 acres. It has received a national award from the National Association of Counties and the Trust for Public Land, ranking it as one of the top open space and farm land conservation programs in the nation. In November 2006, voters overwhelmingly approved Measure F to take effect in 2011, extending the quarter-cent sales tax through 2031.

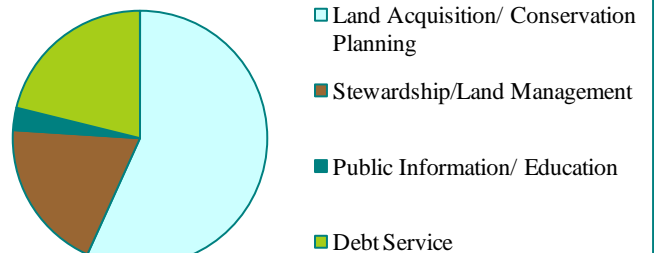
Primary financing for the District comes from this voter-approved sales tax, which currently generates approximately \$16 million annually. Over the past 19 years, the District has secured over \$67 million of matching funds from other sources, including state, federal, and private grants. Historically, the Open Space Authority levied the sales tax and ensured that the District's open space purchases were consistent with the voter-approved expenditure plan. The Authority contracted with the District to acquire open space (planning, appraisal, negotiation, and stewardship). Both the Authority and District have annually adjusted appropriation limits. Pursuant to Measure F, effective April 1, 2011 the Authority reorganized as the Sonoma County Open Space Fiscal Oversight Commission to provide fiscal oversight of the District's operations. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors began levying the sales tax and entered into a contract with the District for funding the administration of Measure F.

The District's budget currently consists of four distinct funds. The first provides for the acquisition and preservation of agricultural and open space lands. The second fund provides for the activities of the Open Space Fiscal Oversight Commission. The third is a stewardship reserve fund for land management needs beyond Measure F (2031). The District's fourth fund is an educational reserve for Cooley Ranch.

Funding Sources



Funding Uses



FY 10-11 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Protected 4,300 acres of land bringing the District's total acres protected to more than 85,000 acres. The protection of these lands ensures the viability of an organic dairy, the on-going management of a sustainable working forest, and the connection of critical wild areas and water quality for a variety of plants and animals including threatened and endangered species.
- Funded approximately \$2.5 million through the District's Matching Grant Program for the Bayer Farm, Colgan Creek, Giorgi Park, Meadowlark Field, Roseland Creek Park and Preserve, and Sonoma Garden Park projects to create recreational and community garden opportunities in underserved communities, expand existing community parks, and restore and enhance riparian and wetland systems.
- Participated in numerous efforts in support of agricultural viability in Sonoma County—including the State of California's California Ag. Vision 2030, the Sonoma County Food Systems Alliance and coordination of the Farm-to-Institution subcommittee; assisted the Board of Supervisors and County partners with the County Lands Project; initiated an Agricultural Technical Advisory Group in partnership with Sonoma County Farm Bureau.
- Initiated approximately \$5 million in capital improvements, including public access projects on North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail/Jacobs Ranch, Laguna de Santa Rosa Trails, and the Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve.
- Performed stewardship activities, including monitoring 50 easement-protected properties totaling more than 15,000 acres, completed site assessments and baseline reports, and processed use requests and amendments for additional District-protected properties.
- Worked with local agencies and non-governmental organization partners to expand initiatives for climate change, sustainable water, and healthy communities.
- Developed a quarterly update on District projects and programs. Expanded the District's environmental education program with an emphasis on agricultural education to more than 20 schools and 40 classes in both English and Spanish.
- Through legislative efforts, partnered to secure passage of AB 1962 to authorize a regional park district, regional park and open-space district, or regional open-space district to accept an irrevocable offer of dedication of an interest in real property.

FY 11-12 OBJECTIVES

- Implement approximately \$1 million in resource management, habitat restoration, and public access projects at selected District-owned properties, including Taylor Mountain, Montini Open Space Preserve, Healdsburg Ridge, and North Slope Sonoma Mountain.
- Complete an inventory of the nearly 7,500 acres of District-owned properties, to evaluate opportunities for protection and enhancement of identified conservation values, to identify and implement effective interim land management practices, and to develop an appropriate long-term disposition strategy.
- Continue to collaborate on land management and public access projects, leveraging resources to attract outside funding towards the accomplishment of joint objectives.
- In collaboration with county and regional partners, participate in projects and programs that address watershed protection and water supply reliability, and climate change through planning and stewardship activities, including stream enhancement and restoration.
- Participate in projects and programs that address agricultural sustainability and local food production including the Food Systems Alliance, the County Lands Project, the feasibility study for a multi-county aggregation facility, identification of an agricultural education and demonstration project.
- Enhance the effectiveness of the Matching Grant Program through the revision of the guidelines, selection criteria, program administration and standard agreements. Host a 2011 workshop and make recommendations for the funding of up to \$3.5 million for projects through the Matching Grant Program.

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FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Budget Division/Fund	FY 10-11 Adopted	FY 11-12 Recommended	% Change
SCAPOSD			
Beginning Cash Balance*	58,454,871	41,204,022	(29.5)
<i>Expenditures</i>			
SCAPOSD			
Operating	7,376,200	7,189,374	(2.5)
Capital Improvements	5,331,145	3,141,770	(41.1)
Land Purchases	19,768,504	17,200,000	(13.0)
Stewardship Reserve	500,000	500,000	0
Funding Fiscal Oversight Commission	0	57,000	-
Cooley Education Program	0	20,000	-
Clover Springs Endowment	275,000	0	(100.0)
Debt Service	0	7,535,180	-
Total Expenditures	33,250,849	35,643,324	7.2
<i>Revenues and Reimbursements</i>			
Sales Tax and Interest Earned Received by the County and Transferred to the District	16,000,000	16,000,000	0
<i>Net Cost/Use of Fund Balance</i>	16,701,470	19,643,324	
Ending Cash Balance	41,204,022	21,560,698	(47.7)

*Funds held in the County's special tax account and the District's operating accounts.

STAFFING SUMMARY

Staffing	FY 10-11 Adopted	FY 11-12 Recommended	FTE Change	% Change
Permanent Positions	26.35	26.52	0.17	0.6

RECOMMENDED BUDGET

In FY 11-12, annual debt service of \$7.5 million on a \$98 million 2007 Measure F Sales Tax Revenue Bond will begin. The bond yielded the conservation of 9,868 acres.

Core Services Maintained

- The FY 11-12 budget of \$28.1 million proposes \$1.5 million for planning and capital improvements on several District-held properties, \$4.3 million for projects through Matching Grant Program, \$14.6 million in land acquisitions, and \$500,000 contribution to the Stewardship Reserve Fund for land management beyond 2031.
- Continue stewardship of the more than 77,000 acres of land protected by District-held conservation and open space easements.
- Using strategic conservation planning, prioritize and pursue land and easement acquisitions based on important resource values, partnerships, and available funding.

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Services Eliminated or Reduced

- The FY 11-12 recommended Operating Budget represents a 2.5% reduction from FY 10-11, which limits conservation planning and acquisition activities, and the ability to effectively manage and steward protected lands.

Strategic Plan Focus

- **Safe, Healthy & Caring Communities.** Support of Health Action's 2020 Vision and corresponding Priorities for Action through agricultural initiatives, public access projects, Matching Grant Program, and outings and education programs; provide educational and recreational opportunities for Sonoma County youth and families.
- **Economic & Environmental Stewardship.** Conservation efforts such as agricultural land preservation support the economic viability of the county; land protection and stewardship activities benefit the natural environment (e.g. source watershed protection, climate change initiatives, restoration).
- **Invest in the Future.** The mission of the District is to preserve open space and agricultural land for future generations of Sonoma County residents.
- **Civic Service & Engagement.** The District will continue to leverage its resources to attract outside funding. Periodic public workshops are held to update the Board and the residents of Sonoma County on the activities of the District, and to engage the public in future acquisition and stewardship planning. The Authority has reorganized as the Sonoma County Open Space Fiscal Oversight Commission to provide independent fiscal oversight of the District's operations.

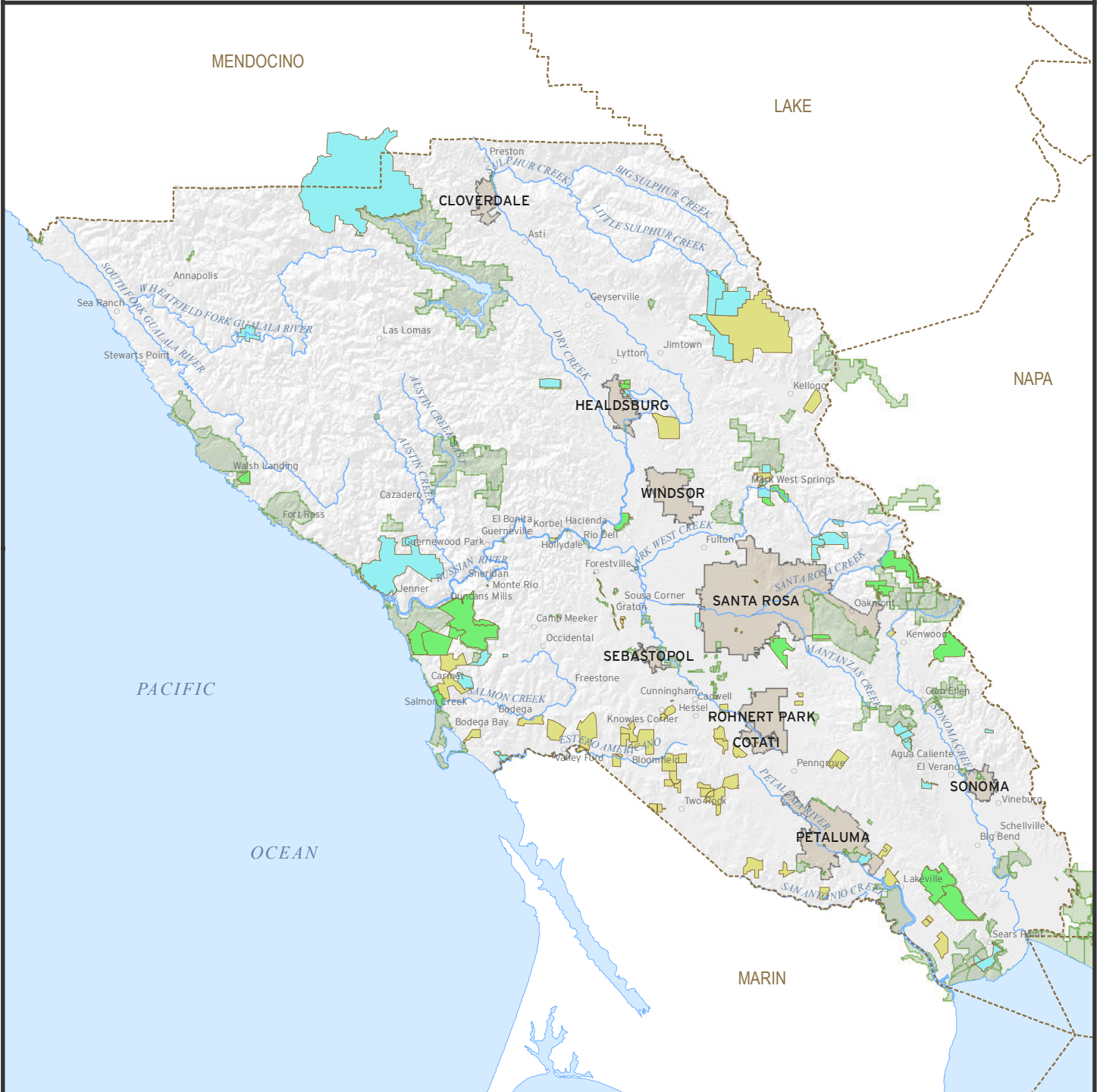
LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

SCAPOSD Fund	FY 11/12 - 15/16	FY 16/17 - 20/21	FY 21/22 - 25/26	FY 26/27 - 30/31
Beginning Cash Balance	57,653,602	6,156,641	235,781	298,248
Revenues				
Sales tax & interest earned	83,161,375	87,321,947	93,788,103	100,952,185
Expenditures				
Operating	37,547,665	38,212,183	38,889,211	37,521,036
Stewardship	12,791,770	6,000,000	7,500,000	8,000,000
Land Purchases	46,756,946	11,500,000	9,800,000	18,100,000
Debt Service	37,561,955	37,530,625	37,536,425	37,532,625
Total Expenditures	134,658,336	93,242,808	93,725,636	101,153,661
Ending Cash Balance	6,156,641	235,781	298,248	96,772
Stewardship Reserve Fund	11,655,808	16,371,569	23,082,287	32,419,107

DEPARTMENT HEAD CONCURRENCE OR COMMENT

The department head concurs with the County Administrator's recommended budget.





LAND INTERESTS OF THE Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District





Legend

District Holdings

Acquisition Plan Designation

-  Farms and Ranches
-  Greenbelts and Scenic Hillside
-  Water, Wildlife, and Natural Areas
-  Recreation and Education

Other Lands

-  Public or Protected Land
-  Incorporated City

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SONOMA COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
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Sources: Sonoma County GIS Group,
USGS, Sonoma Land Trust, SCAPOSD

