

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.

DEPARTMENTAL DESCRIPTION

The 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. In November 2006, voters overwhelmingly approved Measure F to take effect in 2011, extending the quarter-cent sales tax through 2031. Since its inception, the District has protected over 87,000 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.

Primary financing for the District comes from the voter-approved sales tax. The District’s sales tax funds currently generate approximately \$16 million annually. Through March 2011, 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. On 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 now levies the sales tax and entered into a contract with the District for funding the administration of Measure F.

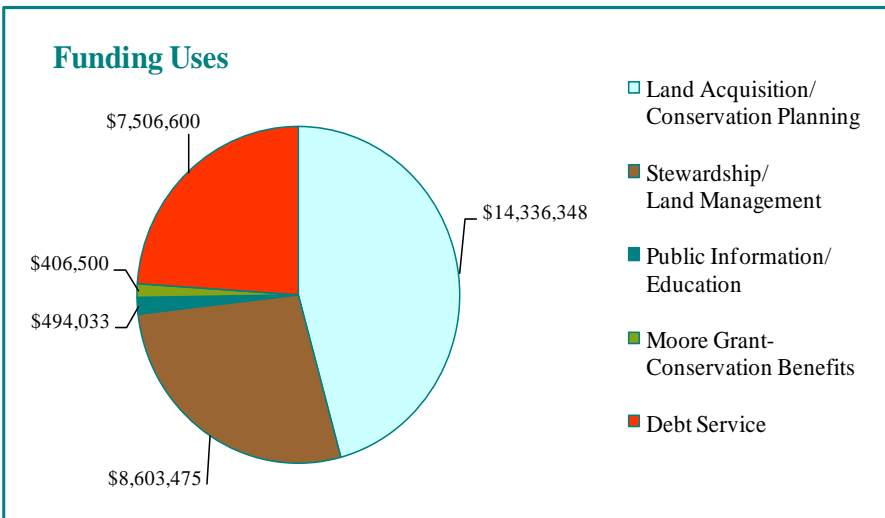
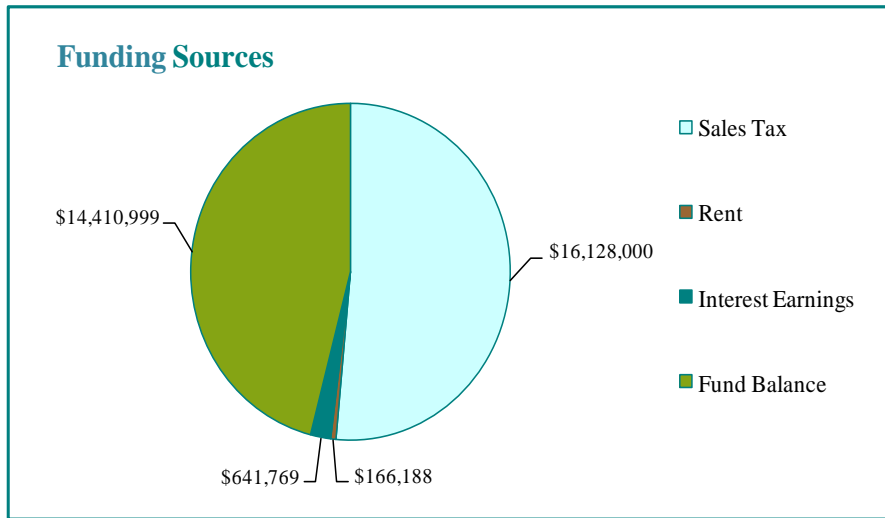
The District’s budget currently consists of six distinct funds. The first provides for the operations of the District to carry out the

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 for land management needs beyond Measure F. The fourth is for operations and maintenance needs of District owned properties during Measure F and after Measure F, if required. The fifth is for a conservation benefit program funded by the Moore Foundation. Lastly, the District’s sixth fund is an educational reserve for Cooley Ranch.

Budget at a Glance:

Total Expenditures	\$31,346,956
Total Revenues	\$24,311,888
Total Net Cost	\$7,035,068
Total Staff	24.75
% Funded by Local Discretionary Funds	0% *

*The District is funded by a voter approved sales tax measure.



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FY 11-12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Protected 3,008 acres of land at a cost of approximately \$8.7 million bringing the District's total acres protected to more than 87,100 acres. The protection of these lands ensures critical access to future parkland, the scenic qualities of a backdrop of the City of Healdsburg, the maintenance of an important wildlife corridor, and the on-going management of a sustainable working forest that is home to endangered Coho salmon.
- Enhanced the effectiveness of the bi-annual Matching Grant Program through the revision of the program's guidelines, selection criteria, and administration. Hosted two well-attended program workshops and prepared to fund \$2.0 million in grants for this competitive program, which preserves, protects, and enhances urban open spaces.
- Stewarded over 85,000 acres of District-protected land. For easement properties, this included monitoring, permitted use requests, and follow up on easement violations. For fee properties, invasive species removal, reduction of fire fuel load, infrastructure maintenance, and minor improvements were completed. Almost all fee properties are currently leased for grazing or some other agricultural use.
- In collaboration with partnering organizations and agencies, continued to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy with District-protected land, through the Taylor Mountain Permit program, District Outings program, and the Agricultural and Environmental Education program.
- Leveraged District funds and staff resources to attract outside funding towards the Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail, Healdsburg Ridge Trail, East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail, Calabazas Creek Preserve Trail, and North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail projects.
- In collaboration with stakeholders, partners, elected officials, and the community, presented a three-year Work Plan to the District's Board of Directors outlining opportunities and challenges in land and natural resource conservation. The Work Plan will guide the District's priorities through FY 14-15.
- Embarked on the development of a county-wide vegetation and habitat map which will increase the quality of data used by the District and its County partners for a variety of planning and environmental compliance activities. The updated vegetation and habitat map will be used for planning and prioritizing land acquisition as well as providing baseline information valuable for land management.
- Working in partnership with resource conservation districts, non-government organizations, and community volunteers, enhanced over a thousand feet of critical riparian habitat along Mark West Creek for Coho salmon.

FY 11-12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

- In collaboration with local and regional partners, received a \$750,000 grant from the Moore Foundation to document the economic value of conserving natural ecosystems, park lands, and agricultural lands.
- Participated in a \$500,000 grant program to map the county's carbon sequestration potential in forest and working landscapes, and to develop tools for greenhouse gas emissions accounting in natural and agricultural landscapes.
- In collaboration with County partners, participated in projects and programs addressing agricultural sustainability and local food production such as the Food Systems Alliance, the Sonoma County Food Forum, the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee, and the County Lands Project.

FY 12-13 OBJECTIVES

- Develop a fee lands strategy to refine land management planning and implementation efforts, evaluate property disposition options, and identify areas where volunteers, partnering organizations, and outside funding could be utilized to further District resources.
- Begin implementation of conservation valuation initiative in partnership with County agencies and other collaborators.
- Begin implementation of county wide carbon sequestration analysis of forests and open space lands.
- Develop a District climate mitigation and adaptation strategy.
- Transfer identified fee lands to park agencies or other land management partners that have the capacity and mission to protect the conservation values intended by the District; the District will retain conservation easements over the transferred properties.
- Using strategic conservation planning, prioritize and pursue land and easement acquisitions based on important resource values, partnerships, and available funding.

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FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Budget Division/Fund	<i>Total Revenue</i>		
	FY 11-12 Adopted	FY 12-13 Recommended	% Change
SCAPOSD			
Beginning Cash Balance	60,893,521	42,027,828	(31.0)
<i>Expenditures</i>			
SCAPOSD			
Operating	7,132,373	7,612,064	6.7
Capital Improvements	3,141,770	3,456,670	10.0
Land & CE Purchases	17,200,000	11,513,000	(33.1)
Stewardship Reserve	500,000	600,000	20.0
Funding of Fiscal Oversight Commission	57,000	52,122	(8.6)
Cooley Education Program	20,000	0	(100.0)
Moore Grant-Conservation Benefits	0	406,500	0.0
SCAPOSD O&M Reserve	0	200,000	0.0
Debt Service	7,535,180	7,506,600	(0.4)
Total Expenditures	35,586,323	31,346,956	(11.9)
<i>Revenues and Reimbursements</i>			
Sales Tax Earned	16,000,000	16,128,000	0.8
Contribution - Measure C	11,867,484	7,375,931	(37.8)
Rental Income	167,268	166,188	(0.6)
Interest Earned	553,362	641,769	16.0
Total Revenues and Reimbursements	28,588,114	24,311,888	(15.0)
<i>Net Cost/Use of Fund Balance</i>	6,998,209	7,035,068	0.5
Ending Cash Balance	32,305,407	17,715,940	(45.2)

STAFFING SUMMARY

Staffing	FY 11-12 Adopted	FY 11-12 Current	FY 12-13 Recommended	FTE Change	% Change
Permanent Positions	26.52	24.92	24.75	(0.17)	(0.68)

RECOMMENDED BUDGET

The recommended budget reflects overall expenditures of \$31.3 million, a \$4.3 million decrease from FY 11-12. Recommended expenditures are supported by \$24 million in revenues and \$7 million in use of fund balance.

Core Services Maintained

- Continue stewardship of the more than 78,000 acres of land protected by District-held easements.
- Continue resource management, habitat, and public access projects at selected District-owned properties, including Taylor Mountain, Montini Preserve, Healdsburg Ridge, and North Slope Sonoma Mountain.
- Support urban space open space conservation through the District's competitive Matching Grant Program.

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Services Eliminated or Reduced

The District will not eliminate nor reduce any core services.

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	60,401,056	31,834,778	15,842,200	4,820,914
Revenues				
Sales Tax & Interest Earned	84,940,076	90,624,142	96,092,623	81,495,330
Expenditures				
Operating	33,205,285	33,785,920	34,376,708	26,349,174
Stewardship	9,406,670	6,300,000	7,200,000	6,800,000
Land Purchases	33,363,000	29,000,000	28,000,000	23,100,000
Debt Service	37,531,400	37,530,800	37,537,200	30,027,050
Total Expenditures	113,506,355	106,616,720	107,113,908	86,276,224
Ending Cash Balance	31,834,777	15,842,200	4,820,915	40,020
Stewardship Reserve Fund	12,669,875	17,780,248	24,622,394	32,552,951

DEPARTMENT HEAD CONCURRENCE OR COMMENT

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