

# AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION & OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

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General Manager

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District permanently protects the diverse agricultural, natural resource, and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations.

BUDGET AT A GLANCE	RECOMMENDED FY 2019-20
Total Expenditures	\$54,833,544
Total Revenues/Use of Fund Balance	\$54,833,544
Total General Fund Contribution	\$0
Total Staff	28.50
% Funded by General Fund	0.00%

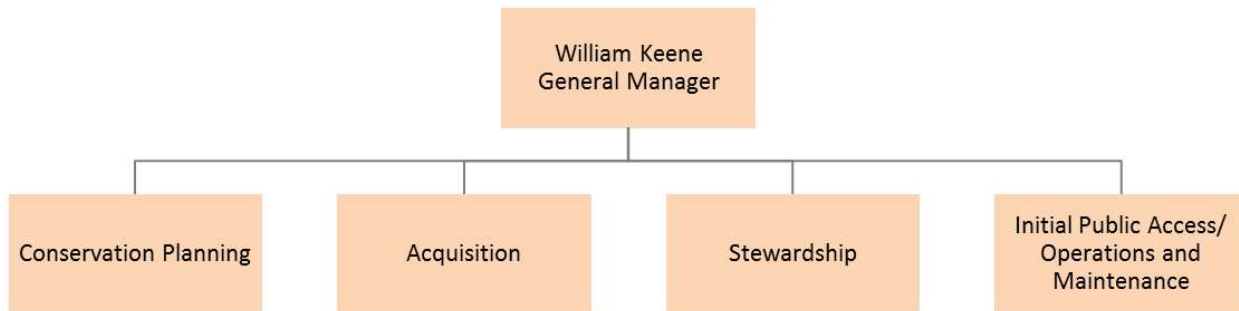
## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) partners with willing landowners, public agencies, and non-profit organizations to permanently protect land through agreements with landowners (conservation easements), purchase of land, and stewardship activities on existing easements and fee title owned properties. Ag + Open Space acquisitions were previously guided by the 2006 long-range acquisition plan, “Connecting Communities and the Land,” which reflected community desires and values and directs preservation to the highest priority farmlands, greenbelts, natural areas, and recreational lands. Ag + Open Space is currently working towards implementation of its “Vital Lands Initiative”, which has built upon the existing guiding documents, while incorporating advanced science and current discussions with the public on future lands to be prioritized for protection in Sonoma County.

Ag + Open Space is funded by Measure F, a Sonoma County sales tax measure. Most of this funding goes toward acquisition of land and easements, stewardship activities, and department operations. Up to 10% of sales tax revenue can be used for initial public access to, and operation and maintenance of, lands purchased by Ag + Open Space.

Ag + Open Space is organized into three program areas. **Conservation Planning** develops and analyzes data to ensure the highest value land is protected. **Acquisition** purchases conservation easements and land to protect farmland, greenbelts, natural areas, and recreational lands. **Stewardship** ensures that the conservation values of lands acquired with taxpayer funds are protected in perpetuity. Ag + Open Space staff monitor and enforce conservation easements, and manage fee title owned properties. While not a separate program, **Initial Public Access, Operation and Maintenance** reflects expenditures by Ag + Open Space for eligible expenditures and negotiated payments to other agencies for eligible work on properties intended for recreational use. For more information, call (707) 565-7360, or visit <http://sonomaopenspace.org/>

# DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## FINANCIAL SUMMARIES

### Expenditures by Program Area

	FY 2018-19 Adopted Budget	FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget	Change from FY 2018-19 Adopted	% Change from FY 2018-19 Adopted
Conservation Planning	3,168,978	3,467,036	298,058	9.4
Acquisition	39,333,924	43,610,084	4,276,160	10.9
Stewardship	5,789,408	4,731,424	(1,057,984)	(18.3)
Initial Public Access, O&M	2,877,500	3,025,000	147,500	5.1
<b>Total Expenditures by Program</b>	<b>51,169,810</b>	<b>54,833,544</b>	<b>3,663,734</b>	<b>7.2</b>

### Permanent Positions by Program Area

	FY 2018-19 Adopted Budget	FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget	Change from FY 2018-19 Adopted	% Change from FY 2018-19 Adopted
Conservation Planning	8.33	8.33	0.00	0.00
Acquisition	8.33	8.33	0.00	0.00
Stewardship	10.83	11.83	1.00	9.20
<b>Total Permanent Positions</b>	<b>27.50</b>	<b>28.50</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>3.62</b>

## Department Budget Details

	FY 2018-19 Adopted Budget	FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget	Change from FY 2018-19 Adopted	% Change from FY 2018-19 Adopted
<b>Expenditures by Character</b>				
Salaries and Benefits	4,394,632	5,005,079	610,447	13.9
Services and Supplies	6,563,949	7,659,508	1,095,559	16.7
Matching Grants	3,901,270	6,361,270	2,460,000	63.1
Capital Expenditures	34,877,500	34,775,000	(102,500)	(0.3)
Transfers within the County*	1,432,459	1,032,687	(399,772)	(27.9)
<b>Total Expenditures by Character</b>	<b>51,169,810</b>	<b>54,833,544</b>	<b>3,663,734</b>	<b>7.2</b>
<b>Revenues/Reimbursements/Use of Fund Balance (Sources)</b>				
Open Space District Sales Tax Revenue	39,559,320	40,631,600	1,072,280	2.7
State, Federal & Other Govt. Revenue	5,500,000	7,750,000	2,250,000	40.9
Revenue-Use of Money & Prop	60,000	90,000	30,000	50.0
Donations and Contributions	4,585,000	5,340,500	755,500	16.5
Internal County Reimbursements and Transfers*	1,465,490	1,021,444	(444,046)	(30.3)
<b>Total Revenues/Use of Fund Balance</b>	<b>51,169,810</b>	<b>54,833,544</b>	<b>3,663,734</b>	<b>7.2</b>

\*Transfers/reimbursements primarily consist of transfers from the Initial Public Access, Operations and Maintenance

## FY 2018-19 Accomplishments

- Conservation Planning led the development of *Living in a Fire Adapted Landscape: Priorities for Resiliency, Sonoma County Natural and Working Lands*. This document represented the top recovery and resiliency priorities of over sixty agricultural and natural resource organizations (the Watershed Collaborative) convened by Ag + Open Space after the 2017 fires. This document informed and was integrated into the Board of Supervisor's Recovery and Resiliency Framework, and continues to guide Ag + Open Space priorities for long term resiliency, including data, analysis and planning, land acquisition and land stewardship.
- Conservation Planning has continued to develop new data to support land conservation prioritization and the development of the Vital Lands Initiative (VLI). New datasets include maps and models of riparian corridors, analyses of agricultural lands and forested landscapes, and the award of a grant from NASA to evaluate the lands affected by the 2017 fires and to inform future countywide resiliency planning
- Acquired three properties (McCullough 2, Wendle, and Cresta 3) totaling 368 acres and two conservation easements (Gravelly Lake and Rips Redwoods) totaling 2,579 acres.
- Transferred Mark West Regional Park and Open Space Preserve lands to Regional Parks (1,192 acres) and will bring the transfer to Carrington Ranch to Regional Parks to the Board by the end of fiscal year 2018-19.
- Accepted five new projects into the 2018 Matching Grants Program cycle totaling \$3,618,943. These projects include the City of Sebastopol's Americorps Trail Development along the Laguna de Santa Rosa, the City of Healdsburg's Badger Park Russian River Access project, Sonoma County Regional Park's Cooper Creek Addition to Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve, Earth Island Institute's Helen Putnam Regional Park Extension, and the City of Petaluma's McNear Peninsula Acquisition and Access Improvements project.
- Presented two Matching Grant projects to the Board for approval (River Lane and Graton Green) both anticipated to close before the end of fiscal year 2018-19.
- Implemented post-fire natural habitat monitoring and land management practices on District owned land affected by the 2017 Sonoma Complex fires.

## FY 2019-20 Objectives

- Execute key elements of the VLI via a set of Board approved implementation plans, in all of the key areas outlined in the District expenditure plan.
- In coordination with Sonoma Water, Ag + Open Space has leveraged funding from NASA for LiDAR vegetation mapping that can be used to target strategic locations for vegetation management and fuel reduction. This data will be shared with County departments to support the overall goal of fuel reduction in the County.
- Determine a funding target for the Stewardship Reserve in coordination with the District's Fiscal Oversight Commission.
- Begin creation of a centralized data center, integrating diverse data sets developed since 1990 by Ag + Open Space to ensure the efficient use of District staff and financial resources and the ability to rapidly and effectively share information with the Board, partners and the community through dashboards and other online tools.
- Acquire six conservation easements that protect natural and scenic resources while furthering sustainable agricultural practices and recreational opportunities.
- Complete the transfer of two properties (Wright Hill and Carrington) to Regional Parks while retaining a conservation easement and recreation covenant to ensure protection of conservation values and permanent public access.
- Update and refine the Matching Grant Program Guidelines and present Matching Grant projects accepted into the program during previous cycles to the Board for approval of grant agreements.
- Implement Saddle Mountain Preserve and Calabazas Creek Preserve Management Plans, including pro-active fuels reduction, invasive species management, and road work.
- Transfer regulatory open space easements (conditioned through the County's project development process) to Permit Sonoma for enforcement.
- Develop an investment strategy to achieve the Stewardship Reserve Fund target to ensure that District held easements are protected in perpetuity.

- Partner with county departments and non-profit partners to ensure the protection of the open space lands of the Sonoma Developmental Center during the State's disposition process.

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## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

### Service Impacts

As a non-general fund department, Ag + Open Space budget constraints are defined by the ¼ cent sales tax revenue from Measure F, which has benefited from a stable economy in recent years. However, there are still lingering impacts from the 2017 Sonoma Complex fires impacting the progress of planned projects.

The Sonoma Complex fires slowed the completion of many projects at Ag + Open Space, such as the Vital Lands Initiative, which required staff to be reassigned for long periods of time and for further collaboration with the Agricultural community. Many projects are back on track such as the transfer of the Mark West Regional Park and Open Space Preserve, which was completed in October 2018.

The Matching Grant amount up for award in the 2018 grant cycle included additional support to recovery efforts in fire-impacted communities. Because the time required to assess the impact of the fire and develop a project was less than the time available for inclusion in the Matching Grant cycle, the funding opportunity has been extended until the 2020 Matching Grant cycle, after which it will be determined if it is still required.

Also back on track, and reflected in the 11% year over year Acquisition increase, are several purchases of conservation easements that were postponed due to Ag + Open Space efforts spent on fire recovery, and landowners need for time to evaluate conservation easements in a post-fire environment.

Ag + Open Space continues to seek and create exemplary data with which to pursue acquisition of conservation easements of importance, and to steward the land through fee title property land management and monitoring of conservation easements in accordance with the easement language.

### Key Issues

- Completion and the beginning of implementation of VLI is the top priority of Ag + Open Space for fiscal year 2019-2020. VLI will provide primary policy direction over the coming years for planning, acquisition and stewardship land conservation. Development and assessment of data for the implementation is key to the increase in Services and Supplies.
- Another long-range issue is the calculation of the required Stewardship Reserve and the investment strategy that will allow the reserve to earn an interest rate high enough for stewardship activities to be available in perpetuity. Creating a new, legislatively approved, investment policy for the Stewardship Endowment will provide a challenge, but will also allow use of funds that would otherwise be held back from easement acquisitions for the endowment.
- The completion of property transfers (Wright Hill and Carrington), and the associated reduced District incurred costs of land management, are key to the reduction costs of Stewardship overall. The increase for capital assets is based on the delay in closing many projects due to the fire.

# BUDGET HEARING CHANGES AND ACTIONS

Adopted as recommended.

## Supplemental Changes

None

## Budget Hearing Actions

None

# DEPARTMENT ADOPTED BUDGET DETAILS

	FY 2018-19 Adopted Budget	FY 2018-19 Actuals (Unaudited)	FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget	FY 2019-20 Adopted Budget	Variance FY 2019-20 Adopted Budget vs. FY 2018-19 Adopted Budget
<b>Expenditures by Character</b>					
Salaries and Benefits	4,394,633	4,159,894	5,005,078	5,005,078	610,445
Services and Supplies	6,563,949	3,119,604	7,659,508	7,659,508	1,095,559
Other Charges	3,901,270	288,941	6,361,270	6,361,270	2,460,000
Capital Expenditures	34,877,500	18,604,158	34,775,000	34,775,000	(102,500)
Other Financing Uses	1,432,459	27,359	1,032,687	1,032,687	(399,772)
<b>Total Expenditures by Character</b>	<b>51,169,811</b>	<b>26,199,956</b>	<b>54,833,543</b>	<b>54,833,543</b>	<b>3,663,732</b>
<b>Revenues/Reimbursements/Use of Fund Balance (Sources)</b>					
Intergovernmental Revenues	45,059,321	25,672,412	48,381,599	48,381,599	3,322,278
Revenue - Use of Money & Prop	60,000	291,688	90,000	90,000	30,000
Miscellaneous Revenues	4,585,000	4,208,311	5,340,500	5,340,500	755,500
Other Financing Sources	1,465,490	51,550	1,021,444	1,021,444	(444,046)
Reimbursements	0	239,692	0	0	0
<b>Total Revenues/Use of Fund Balance</b>	<b>51,169,811</b>	<b>30,463,653</b>	<b>54,833,543</b>	<b>54,833,543</b>	<b>3,663,732</b>