



Attachment "A"

***SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE***  
***February 28, 2013 MINUTES***

5:08 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,  
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

**Members Present**

Laurie Gallian	Sue Conley	Jeff Holtzman	Kristin Thigpen
Shanti Edwards	Cary Fargo	John Nagle	Steve Rabinowitsh
Don McEnhill	Bill Smith	Jan McFarland	

**Members Absent**

Dennis Murphy

**Staff Present** Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager; Sue Gallagher, County Counsel; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Kathleen Marsh, Stewardship Coordinator; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Public Attendees** Donna Norton, Nancy Summers, Ken Wells, Susan Kirks, Donna Spilman, Stan Gold, Tom Hammond

**Public Comment**

No public comments on items not on agenda.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Gallian asked for comments on the minutes of January 24, 2013. Motion by Jeff Holtzman to approve minutes and seconded by Don McEnhill. Nine members were in favor; two abstentions.

**General Manager's Report**

- Jonathan Glass of LandPaths passed away earlier this week and was remembered for all of his contributions to the District, and to protecting natural resources and educating others. He will be missed. Chair Gallian suggested the meeting adjourn in his memory.
- Taylor Mountain opened to the public and there was a well-attended opening ceremony on Friday, February 22, 2013.

- The transfer of the Montini Open Space Preserve to the City of Sonoma will go the Board on March 12, 2013 for approval.
- The North Slope trail improvements are complete. The District has been working on the transfer to Regional Parks.
- Preservation Ranch is a very different opportunity that came to the District unexpectedly. It has been a project that has been kept confidential and has just become public knowledge. The District is working with the Conservation Fund, the California Coastal Conservancy and Sonoma Land Trust to purchase the property. The District will retain a conservation easement.

### **Matching Grant Program Sub Committee**

Chair Gallian noted that there are four committee members that volunteered at the January 24, 2013 Advisory Committee meeting: Sue Conly, Jeff Holtzman, Bill Smith and herself. She asked if an email had been sent by the Committee Clerk to the members who were absent at the last meeting. Emails were sent and Jan McFarland volunteered to join the Sub Committee. Kristin Thigpen approved and Steve Rabinowitsh seconded. All were in favor.

### **New Acquisition Projects**

Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager, presented new acquisition projects for the District. She explained that the District uses a combination of a qualitative and quantitative system to determine which properties move from the candidate list to the active project list. Eight new projects have recently moved to the active projects list. To keep a balance between open space categories, a number of farms & ranches, and greenbelts & scenic hillside projects are being started at this time.

In addition to the eight new projects, the District is working on an opportunity project, which is to acquire a conservation easement over Preservation Ranch, a 20,000-acre property near Gualala in the north part of the county. There is restoration potential on the property as it has been harvested for timber. The Coastal Conservancy has committed ten million and the Conservation Fund six million, with the District closing the gap with two to three million dollars. There are commercial timber rights on the land and there is the possibility of selling carbon credits. The acquisition will contribute to the protection of the watershed. The Conservation Fund will likely offer some level of guided and/or permitted recreational uses. This acquisition is a very exciting, unexpected and time-sensitive opportunity.

- 1) **Glenn Ranch** is a 230-acre active sheep operation along D Street in Petaluma. It has three certifications of compliance. It is a multigenerational ranch and a conservation easement would protect the edge of Petaluma from urban sprawl. It is highly visible and has an adjacent 220 acres that the owners may want to protect as well.
- 2) **LaFranchi Ranch** is a 1,189-acre cattle grazing operation in the north part of the county, southeast of Cloverdale, visible from Highway 128. It also is a multigenerational ranch and there has been a transition of ownership. The family wants to maintain grazing and doesn't want the land to turn into vineyards. This property is important for wildlife connectivity. The District is collaborating with California Rangeland Trust to protect this land.
- 3) **Spring Hill Ranch** is a 313-acre property near the Marin County line owned by Larry Peter's Dairy and Petaluma Creamery. This property has three certificates of compliance. Peter's Pumpkin Patch is on this property. It is adjacent to McClelland Dairy and land protected by MALT.
- 4) **Almeida Ranch / Jones Dairy** is a 146-acre agricultural property outside of Penngrove near Petaluma Hill Road. There are four development rights. A conservation easement would provide

a buffer against urban sprawl and protect the urban separator between Rohnert Park and Penngrove. The District project would also protect the continued operation of the dairy. There would be potential to expand the easement over adjacent property.

- 5) **Roberts Road** is a 398-acre greenbelt project in southeastern Rohnert Park that would protect an important urban separator. The property is highly visible from Petaluma Hill Road. There is grazing and an intact oak woodland on the property, which is close to Regional Parks' Crane Creek. A 20-lot subdivision has been approved to go forward.
- 6) **Lafranconi** is a 211-acre greenbelt project near the Laguna de Santa Rosa within the Santa Rosa/ Sebastopol urban separator. There is grazing on this property, and there are vernal pools and wetlands. This is core California Tiger Salamander habitat and the project would provide the opportunity for habitat restoration.
- 7) **Madeline Poncia Trust** is a 175-acre greenbelt project that is an active dairy on the edge of Rohnert Park. It is highly visible from Stony Point Road and Rohnert Park Expressway. The project would provide a buffer from urban development.
- 8) **Gloekner Ranch** is a 3,364-acre property near Cloverdale that is high-diversity habitat near Lake Sonoma. There are 33 certificates of compliance. The property is within a designated species rich area, with over fifty percent covered with core forest and oak woodlands. The property has important riparian corridors and makes up more than ten percent of the watershed.

There are no new projects with a primary purpose of recreation.

### **Mitigation Project Proposals/Policy**

Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager, provided a PowerPoint presentation on new mitigation project proposals that can affect the mitigation policy. Ms. Emerson and Mr. Bill Keene, General Manager, have been meeting with members in the community in order to gather information on what people would like to see in the policy. This item will be brought back to the Advisory Committee in April or May of this year.

A question was presented to the members and staff by Advisory Committee member Steve Rabinowitsh: Can the County Supervisors, as part of their land use powers, amend the county codes to not allow any required mitigation from approvals of private developments be allowed on county open space properties?

Sue Gallagher, County Counsel, is researching the question and will report back to the Advisory Committee.

### **Projects in Negotiations**

- New projects already discussed under New Acquisition Projects item.

### **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members**

#### **Kristin Thigpen**

Southern Sonoma Resource Conservation District are hosting a walk on Sonoma Mountain's North Slope Trail on April 20, 2013 from 10am to 3pm.

#### **Laurie Gallian, Chair**

Participated in the Cheese Conference in the City of Sonoma and encouraged everyone to partake in the Sonoma Marin Cheese Trail.

**Adjournment:** 7:03 pm Advisory Committee Members adjourned in memory of Jonathan Glass.

Next scheduled meeting date: March 28, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,  
Advisory Committee Secretary