



**AG + OPEN SPACE**  
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

---

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order  
October 28, 2021 | 5:00 pm**

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Steve Rabinowitsh	Brian Barnacle	Don McEnhill	Wendy Eliot
Michelle Whitman	Neysa Hinton	Cary Fargo	Bill Smith
Paul Martin	Curt Nichols	Sue Conley	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

John Nagle	Tawny Tesconi	Jan McFarland	Kristina Tierney
------------	---------------	---------------	------------------

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Misti Arias, General Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Stephanie Tavares-Buhler, Senior Acquisition Specialist; Kim Batchelder, Vegetation Management Coordinator; Curtis Kendall, Acquisition Specialist; Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist; Stephanie Waite, Extra Help GIS Specialist; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Call to Order**

Chair Whitman called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Ms. Whitman welcomed the Advisory Committee's newest member, Wendy Eliot. Ms. Eliot introduced herself to the members and staff.

**Public Comment**

Chair Whitman asked for any public comments on items not on the agenda. Susan Kirks had a public comment on Paula Lane Open Space Preserve, requesting support for the badgers that have been misplaced on this property and feels the habitat needs to be restored.

**Approval of Minutes from September 23, 2021**

Chair Whitman asked for any comments or revisions regarding the September 23, 2021 minutes. There were none. Bill Smith motioned for the minutes to be approved as is. Curt Nichols seconded the motion. All were in favor except Neysa Hinton, Brian Barnacle, Sue Conley and Wendy Eliot who were not present at the September meeting. There were no public comments on the minutes.

## General Manager's Report

- Misti Arias, General Manager, reported that Ariel Kelley, former Advisory Committee member, has been reappointed to the Fiscal Oversight Commission and will no longer serve on the Advisory Committee.
- A new Advisory Committee member will start at the next meeting, Jesús Guzmán. He will represent the fourth district.
- The Ag + Open Space Audit Services Agreement will go to the Board on December 7, 2021 and the Herbicide Use Report will go to the Board on December 14, 2021 as a joint item with Sonoma Water.
- Tuesday, November 2, 2021, acquisition of fee title of the Paulin Meadow property on the Chanate campus, otherwise known as Parcel J, will go to the Board for approval.
- We are currently recruiting for an Acquisitions Assistant. Applications are being accepted through November 16, 2021.
- Ms. Arias introduced the new Extra Help GIS Analyst, Stephanie Waite, to the Advisory Committee. Ms. Waite introduced herself to the Advisory Committee members.

## Acquisition Projects Overview

Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager, introduced the Acquisition Projects Overview item. Three projects were highlighted; two conservation easements and one fee land transfer: Abril Ranch, MarkWest Wikiup, and Paulin Meadow.

Curtis Kendall, Acquisition Specialist, presented the Abril Ranch property, located 7.5 miles east of Cloverdale on the western edge of the Geysers stream fields and adjacent to the Ag + Open Space Klesko Ranch conservation easement. This property is early in its negotiation process and would protect natural and scenic resources.

Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist, presented the Mark West Wikiup conservation easement, which is a 31-acre property in the Larkfield-Wikiup neighborhood with 26 acres adjacent to the Mark West Creek. This property offers recreation, natural resources protection and water educational opportunities.

Stephanie Tavares-Buhler, Senior Acquisition Specialist, presented the Paulin Meadow (Parcel J) property, 10.5 acres in Northwest Santa Rosa adjacent to Chanate Road and Paulin Creek Preserve. This property would protect natural resources, offer recreational and educational opportunities and urban open space resources. It is a fee acquisition and would be incorporated in the Paulin Creek Preserve with a conservation easement over it.

For more information, please feel free to contact Ms. Kuszmar, Mr. Kendall, Ms. Morris or Ms. Tavares-Buhler at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Public comment from Susan Kirks, who is in support of all projects but against hunting on the Abril property.



### **Vegetation Management Program Update**

Kim Batchelder, Vegetation Management Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Vegetation Management Program. This program is funded from the 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires PG&E Settlement with Sonoma County and overseen by the Board of Supervisors. It aims to provide grants to support vegetation management efforts to communities and organizations throughout the county to reduce the threat of wildfire and help to create a more fire resilient landscape. Mr. Batchelder is overseeing this grant program and collaborating with many partners such as CALFIRE and County Departments like Permit Sonoma. Mr. Batchelder presented a progress report and next steps for this program.

For more information please feel free to contact Mr. Batchelder at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Public comment from Susan Kirks, who is in support of Mr. Batchelder in the Coordinator position and this program.

### **Projects in Negotiations**

Paulin Meadow was listed on the Projects in Negotiations spreadsheet as a Farm and Ranch but is not and this will be corrected.

Wendy Eliot commented on the Big Sulphur Creek project, and asked if it is the same owner that was in trouble. Ms. Arias answered that yes it was, and that this conservation easement project was brought to the Ag + Open Space by the District Attorney's office because of DFW and Water Board violation issues. Ag + Open Space is working with the DA and landowner to put a conservation easement over a portion of the property as part of a settlement agreement.

### **Announcements from Advisory Committee Members**

No announcements were made.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Whitman adjourned the meeting at 6:45.

Next Meeting: December 9, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson  
*Advisory Committee Secretary*

