



Attachment "A"

*SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
March 26, 2015 MINUTES*

5:07 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,  
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

**Members Present**

Sue Conley	John Azevedo	Doug Lipton	John Nagle
Bill Smith	Jan McFarland	Kristin Thigpen	Jeffrey Holtzman
Cary Fargo	Gary Wysocky	Steve Rabinowitsh	John Dell'Osso

**Members Absent**

Janet Orchard	Laurie Gallian	Don McEnhill
Curt Nichols	Shanti Edwards	

**Staff Present** Bill Keene, General Manager; Stuart Martin, Land Acquisition Specialist; Amy Ricard, Community Relations Specialist; Sue Gallagher, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Public Comment**

Chair Steve Rabinowitsh asked for public comments on items not listed on the agenda.

Sue Buxton spoke about the Roblar Quarry and shared what an amazing property it is and suggested to the Committee and the District to consider acquiring the property.

Susan Kirks, who sat on the Advisory Committee from 2008 to 2010 and was appointed from the second District, wanted to know why there is not more protected lands in her part of the County, which is the Petaluma area. She acknowledged that there are a lot of political aspects to open space, however, she would like to see the natural resources of the Roblar Road area be protected, which includes the American Badger, California Tiger Salamander and California Red-Legged Frog, all endangered species. West Petaluma to Occidental and Bodega Bay is an important wildlife corridor. There will be a talk this Saturday, March 28, 2015, presented by the Bodega Land Trust Walks and Talks Series. Ms. Kirks passed out a flyer for the event to the Committee members, staff and public. She explained that the talk would be about the true nature of the American Badger in Sonoma and Marin counties. Ms. Kirks extended the invitation on behalf of the Bodega Land Trust. She also expressed gratitude for the Paula Lane Nature Preserve in Petaluma that was preserved through a Matching Grant Project by the District in 2012 and they are now in year three of this

project. It was the first property to be conserved for the 100 year old American Badger habitat.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Rabinowitsh asked for comments on the minutes from February 26, 2015. Committee members had no corrections and Chair Rabinowitsh announced that the minutes were approved.

### **General Manager's Report**

- There was a dedication of the East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at 10:30 at the Jack London State Historic Park Winery Ruins. Some Advisory Committee members were there and about 100 people altogether. About 80% of the people started the hike but not everyone made it to East slope, which is quite a long hike. It was an inspiring and wonderful day.
- There was a dedication of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve on Monday, March 23, 2015 at 2:00 at Jacobs Ranch as well. Supervisor Gorin, District staff and Regional Parks were at the event. It was a blustery day but no rain and there was a nice hike.
- Mr. Keene attended the Bay Nature Environmental Awards dinner that took place on Sunday, March 22, 2015. Ralph Benson, former Executive Director of the Sonoma Land Trust, was honored at the dinner. The Sonoma Land Trust has protected nearly 50,000 acres of land in Sonoma County and they are a wonderful partner for the District to work with. A new Executive Director has been hired, Dave Koehler, who served as the Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust since 1990, and will start on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Keene suggested inviting Mr. Koehler to the Advisory Committee meeting in May to meet the members.
- Mr. Keene also attended the California Climate and Agriculture Summit on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at the UC Davis campus. Much of the conference focused on climate change and how it affects agriculture. Sonoma County is doing fairly well with our water supply with some challenges; however, the majority of the state is not doing so well. The drought is affecting crop sizes, or producing no crops at all. It is a critical time for water policy.
- Mr. Keene also attended the Science for Parks, Parks for Science conference on Thursday, March 26, 2015 at the UC Berkeley campus. E. O Wilson was the keynote speaker. He is a supporter of biodiversity, naturalist, speaker, and researcher of extinction rates. He spoke about human impact on plants and animals. There has been a 1000 times higher extinction rate since humans came on the scene. There are about 2 million known species and about 8 million still not cataloged. Of the 2 million, about 300,000 of them are mostly vertebrates and plants. The microorganisms are harder to find. The extinction rate has much to do with the loss of habitat. He suggested that humans need to do a better job of protecting habitat and need to use land efficiently. Half of the planet, 50%, should be permanently preserved. Currently, only 15% is preserved. Sonoma County has 10% of the land preserved. Only about 10-12% of the oceans are protected worldwide. Species decline will increase rapidly without much more protection than there currently is.
- The update to the Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure and Youth Engagement item will be going to the Board on April 14, 2015.
- The Colgan Creek Matching Grant Project will be going to the Board on April 28, 2015.

### **New Acquisition Projects: Mattos Dairy and Rips Redwoods**

Stuart Martin, Land Acquisitions Specialist, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Advisory Committee on two new acquisition projects. One is a dairy site and the other a coastal forestland.

The first, Mattos Dairy, actually has two working dairies on the property. It is in the Two Rock Valley area on the edge of Mecham and Pepper Roads. This area is a dairy belt, with the Camozzi and Mazzetta dairies adjacent to Mattos. The dairy farmers will continue to live on the farm. Their families have owned the land since the 1940's and it was a dairy prior to that as well. The Mattos have an organic dairy and they remove thistle by hand as there is no spraying. There are several ponds and the property is quite hilly. The dairy has Jersey cows and they sell the milk locally and it gets made into French yoghurt. There is a good market, and good land base, and there would be one conservation easement on both dairies. Stempe Creek runs through the property for about ¾ of a mile which flows out to the estero. There is a strong watershed and riparian habitat. District staff are starting to talk about the project structure

The second property, Rips Redwoods, is in the northwest part of the County two miles inland from the coast. Two miles of the Gualala River runs through the property which would be wonderful to protect for the salmon. There are redwood forests, with some old growth scattered throughout. The property is about 106,000 acres. There is a freshwater pond, a mix of woods, a large riparian area, a lake and open meadows. There are some buildings. The easement would go over the entire property and would preserve the redwoods and wildlife habitat.

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available at the District upon request.

### **District Website**

Amy Ricard, Community Relations Specialist, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Advisory Committee on the District Website redesign. The new website will be more interactive, user friendly and up-to-date. It will be more reflective of the District. Ms. Ricard has been working on the project for about a year and the launch date is soon. There has been robust staff engagement representing each program. The District did not have a Community Relations Specialist for a couple of years and this project was back logged but it is gaining momentum now. The new website will have less text and more graphics, be more interactive and integrated with social networks. Our current website designer, MIG, takes a long time to update and is costly. With the new website, we will be able to make quick and easy updates in-house. The information will be easier to find. We also want to highlight the stories of the landowners and the connection between people and the land. The story of us, the District, will also be prominent.

Ms. Ricard proceeded to open the website to show the members of the Advisory Committee.

Chair Rabinowitsh turned the meeting over to the committee members and members of the public to ask questions and discuss the website redesign. Questions and comments are as follows:

- Add a button labeled How to Get on the Land—members felt that people would want that option
- Members would like the quote on the home page to include more of the mission, and that the word agriculture should be part of the quote
- There was a request that agriculture be listed first and be a more prominent part of the website

- Members would like the map of properties be easier to find
- A definition of fee property should be on the website
- An icon of a hiker, binoculars or a map on how to get to us, driving directions
- Descriptions of parking lots and how to access the properties
- Would like equal representation of women and men
- An explanation of natural resources, wildlife protection and the sensitivity of the properties protected
- Would like the “Where We Work” tab to be labeled differently, maybe to “What We Protect” or “Protected Lands”
- Would like a Projects in Progress tab
- Properties that are accessible versus properties that are not, can there be two different maps? Maybe color coded tabs that are easily distinguishable. There was concern about addresses given out to private properties
- Members asked if there would be an opportunity to have access to the website on their own
- Members would like their affiliations added to their names and the district they are representing
- They would like a link to District partners
- Matching Grant Program properties should be identifiable
- Keep agriculture properties more vague, don’t identify them as dairy etc because they can change often
- Will the website be linked to tourism, business etc
- Explanation of why people can’t access certain properties
- A time lapse of how the District has grown
- A map of before and now
- Accessible to Spanish speaking people

Ms. Ricard will take the comments and suggestions into consideration and will accept emails for further input.

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available at the District upon request.

### **Projects in Negotiations**

The McCullough Phase 2 project is on hold. The property owner wants to stay on the land longer. The District will not move forward on negotiations until the landowner feels ready.

Colgan Creek will go to the board in late April.

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

#### Kristin Thigpen

On April 8, 2015 from 8:00 to 5:00 the Sonoma County Climate Adaptation Forum will be held at Sonoma State University. Supervisor Gorin will be there, as well as Jay Jasperse of the Water Agency and other speakers.

#### Jeffrey Holtzman

Mr. Holtzman was at another bird group on Taylor Mountain. They saw house wrens with nesting materials, a pair of Cooper’s hawks doing a nest call, and nesting materials for a lark sparrow.

Doug Lipton

The Advisory Committee Ag Subcommittee met today and were briefed on the Incubator Farm project; a project that can bring community together through farming.

On Monday April 13, 2015, Gary Hirshberg from Stonyfield Farm, the world's leading organic yogurt producer, will be at SHED in Healdsburg for a free event from 7:00 to 8:30pm.

Kristin Thigpen

There is a bill in the U.S. Congress that if passed will mandate all states to have to label GMO foods. Google it and talk to your Congressmen/women about this bill.

**Adjournment:** 6:51 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: April 23, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,  
Advisory Committee Secretary