



SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE FISCAL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
COMMISSIONERS

Mike Sangiacomo (Sonoma)
Todd Mendoza (Petaluma)
Regina De La Cruz (Rohnert Park)

Bob Anderson (Healdsburg)
Eric Koenigshofer (Occidental)
Jeff Owen (Alternate)

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

747 Mendocino Avenue—Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

February 6, 2020 | 5:00 pm

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1. Call to Order
 2. Agenda Items to be Held or Taken Out of Order; Off- Agenda Items
 3. General Announcements Not Requiring Deliberation or Decision
 4. Public Comment
The Brown Act requires that time be set aside for public comment on items not agendized.
 5. Correspondence/ Communications
 6. Approval of Commission Minutes **Attachment 1** January 9, 2020
 7. Financial Report **Attachment 2** Julie Mefferd | Administrative & Fiscal Services Manager
 8. Ad Hoc Committee Reports Fire Recovery Review (Anderson/Koenigshofer)
 9. Stewardship Update **Attachment 3** Sheri Emerson | Stewardship Program Manager
 10. Suggested Next Meeting
March 5, 2020
 11. Adjournment

AGENDAS AND MATERIALS: Agendas and most supporting materials are available on the District's website at sonomaopenspace.org. Due to legal, copyright, privacy or policy considerations, not all materials are posted online. Materials that are not posted are available for public inspection between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 747 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS: Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Commission/Committee after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection at the District office at 747 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA during normal business hours.

DISABLED ACCOMMODATION: If you have a disability which requires an accommodation, an alternative format, or requires another person to assist you while attending this meeting, please contact Julie Mefferd at 707-565-7368, as soon as possible to ensure arrangements for accommodation.

ATTACHMENT 1



SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE FISCAL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION COMMISSIONERS

Mike Sangiacomo (Sonoma)
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Jeff Owen (Alternate)

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

747 Mendocino Avenue—Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

January 9, 2019 | 5:00 pm

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bob Anderson (Chair), Eric Koenigshofer (Vice Chair), Mike Sangiacomo (Chair Pro Tempore), Regina de la Cruz, Jeff Owen

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Keene, General Manager; Lisa Pheatt, County Counsel; Julie Mefferd, Administrative and Fiscal Services Manager; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Jake Newell, Stewardship Specialist; Fraser Ross, Stewardship Specialist Extra-Help.

PUBLIC PRESENT: Wendy Elliot, Sonoma Land Trust; Bert Whitaker, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Steve Ehret, Sonoma County Regional Parks; Melanie Parker, Sonoma County Regional Parks.

1. Call to Order

Commissioner de la Cruz called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Election of Officers

On a nomination by Commissioner Koenigshofer, Commissioner Anderson was elected Chair.
On a nomination by Commissioner Owen, Commissioner Koenigshofer was elected Vice Chair.
On a nomination by Commissioner Owen, Commissioner Sangiacomo was elected Chair Pro Tempore.
Following the election, Commissioner Anderson chaired the meeting.

3. Agenda Items to be Held or Taken Out of Order; Off- Agenda Items

There was none.

4. General Announcements Not Requiring Deliberation or Decision

Commissioner Anderson distributed materials related to the Vital Lands Initiative.

5. Public Comment

Wendy Elliot, Conservation Director of Sonoma Land Trust, spoke in support of the Matching Grant Project for the Cooper Creek addition to Taylor Mountain.

6. Correspondence/ Communications

7. Approval of Commission Minutes

On a motion by Commissioner Owen and a second by Commissioner Koenigshofer, the December 5, 2019 minutes were approved.

ATTACHMENT 1

On a motion by Commissioner Owen and a second by Commissioner Sangiacomo, the December 11, 2019 minutes were approved.

8. Financial Report

Julie Mefferd reviewed the monthly financial statements for November 2019.

9. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

No Ad Hoc Committees have met.

10. Creation of Ad Hoc Committees for 2020 and Assignment of Commissioners

Ad Hoc Committees were formed and commissioners were assigned as follows:

Annual Report/Audit Report Review (Anderson, Owen)

Matching Grant Program (De La Cruz/Owen)

Real Estate Options (Koenigshofer /Owen)

Fire Recovery Review (Anderson/Koenigshofer)

11. Review of Rules of Governance

12. Taylor Mountain Management Plan

Bert Whitaker, Director and Steve Ehret, Park Planning Manager of Sonoma County Regional Parks gave a presentation.

13. Closed Session

The Commission adjourned to Closed Session at 6:07 p.m.

14. Report on Closed Session

The Commission reconvened to Open Session at 7:26 p.m. and reported the following:

Matteri Easement

Resolution 2020-001

On a motion by Commissioner Owen and second by Commissioner de la Cruz, the Commission determined that the District is not paying more, or receiving less, than the fair market value for the interests exchanged in connection with a proposed amendment to the Matteri Conservation Easement.

15. Suggested Next Meetings

February 6, 2020

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

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ATTACHMENT 2

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Consolidated Balance Sheet - District and OSSTA Funds
December 31, 2019

Assets

Cash and Investments	\$66,296,274
Accounts Receivable	0
Other Current Assets	1,254
Intergovernmental Receivables	10,000

Total Assets	<u><u>\$66,307,528</u></u>
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Liabilities and Fund Balance

Current Payables	\$0
Other Current Liabilities	21,694
Due to Other Governments	13,510
Deferred Revenue	0
Long-Term Liabilities	0

Total Liabilities	<u>35,204</u>
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Fund Balance

Nonspendable - Prepaid Expenditures	1,254
Restricted - District Activities	66,271,070
Total Fund Balance	66,272,324

Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	<u><u>\$66,307,528</u></u>
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Cash by Fund

OSSTA - Measure F	\$56,103,406
Open Space District	1,925,838
Fiscal Oversight Commission	221
Stewardship Reserve*	0
Cooley Reserve	153,002
Operations and Maintenance	8,113,658

Total Cash by Fund	<u><u>\$66,296,124</u></u>
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*On July 1, 2015 the County of Sonoma Measure F Sales Tax Refunding Bonds, Series 2015 were issued. The transaction provided a savings of \$13.6 million, in part by following the Commission's recommendation of paying down \$30 million in principal, as well as obtaining a lower interest rate. The Commission recommended using the \$10 million in the Stewardship Reserve Fund as part of the \$30 million paydown. Additionally, the Commission directed use of the \$7.5 million annual savings resulting from the shortened term to fund the Stewardship Reserve beginning in the fiscal year 2024-2025. FOC Minute Order #13 dated May 14, 2015 reflects this direction.

ATTACHMENT 2

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Consolidated District and OSSTA Budget to Actual
For the six months ended December 31, 2019
50% of Year Complete

	Budget Final	Actual Year to Date	Encumbrances Year to Date	Remaining Balance	% of Remaining
Revenues					
Tax Revenue *	\$25,254,000	\$8,340,514		\$16,913,486	66.97%
Intergovernmental	7,750,000	109,511		7,640,489	98.59%
Use of Money & Prop	590,000	(158,299)		748,299	126.83%
Miscellaneous Revenues	5,340,500	32,871		5,307,629	
Other Financing Sources	1,021,444	7,500		1,013,944	99.27%
Total Revenues	39,955,944	8,332,097		31,623,847	79.15%
Expenditures					
Salaries and Benefits	5,005,078	2,010,749		2,994,329	59.83%
Services and Supplies	11,778,805	1,472,970	\$4,115,100	6,190,735	52.56%
Other Charges	7,707,333	109,511	1,236,552	6,361,270	82.54%
Capital Expenditures**	35,074,928	67,290	231,888	34,775,750	99.15%
Other Financing Uses	8,539,312	3,191,229		5,348,083	62.63%
Total Expenditures	68,105,456	6,851,749	5,583,541	55,670,166	81.74%
Net Earnings (Cost)	(\$28,149,512)	1,480,348	(\$5,583,541)	(\$24,046,319)	
Beginning fund balance		64,791,976			
Ending Fund Balance		66,272,324			

Note: Sales tax collected as of December 31, 2018 was \$9,854,401. Current collections are -15.36% over the prior year.

\$8,340,514
\$9,854,401
-15.36%

(California Department of Tax and Fee Administration)

Note: Negative Use of Money and Property relates to the amortization of gains and losses of investments, not the rate of return.

** Capital expenditure breakdown

Capital Expenditure - Tacoma 4x4	\$	35,817
CIP -Building & Improvement		31,474
	\$	<u>67,290</u>

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 30, 2020

To: Ag + Open Space Fiscal Oversight Commission

From: Sheri J. Emerson, Stewardship Manager

Subject: **Stewardship Update and Reserve Agenda Item for Commission Meeting on February 6, 2020**

Stewardship Workshop and Reserve Fund

A Stewardship Workshop and Reserve Fund discussion is scheduled for the Ag + Open Space Board of Directors meeting on April 13, 2020. Staff will present a draft of this material to the Fiscal Oversight Commission at your February 6 meeting. Topics will include:

- The current portfolio of lands protected by Ag + Open Space
- Draft *Ag + Open Space Stewardship Policy* (revised from the 2005 *District Stewardship Manual*)
- Draft *Ag + Open Space Fee Lands Strategy* (revised from the 2012 *District Fee Lands Strategy*)
- Long term planning for perpetual stewardship obligations

Please review the attached draft documents and be prepared to discuss at your February 6 meeting, or you may provide comments directly to me via email at sheriemerson@sonoma-county.org.

Thank you for your continued support of the Ag + Open Space, and your guidance in developing the content for the upcoming Stewardship Workshop and Reserve Fund presentation to our Board.

SONOMA COUNTY AG + OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

STEWARDSHIP POLICY

January 29, 2020 -- Draft

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1990, the voters of Sonoma County created the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (“District”) to permanently protect the diverse agricultural, natural resource, and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations. The District is funded through 2031 by a voter-approved sales tax, which was reauthorized by the voters in 2006 through approval of Measure F, known as the Sonoma County Open Space, Clean Water and Farmland Protection Measure. The 2006 Expenditure Plan (Appendix A) describes how the District’s sales tax revenue may be spent.

Easements

The District protects land primarily through acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements. These easements entail the acquisition and stewardship of a partial, non-possessory interest in a property. This typically includes retirement of certain development rights as well as land-use restrictions designed to preserve the identified conservation values. Conservation easements are perpetual agreements that “run with the land,” and remain in effect regardless of who owns the remaining property interests. With conservation easements, the District can protect more land at a lower cost than it could if it purchased the land itself, which allows the District to leverage its limited sales tax dollars for maximum conservation impact.

Fee Purchase

In exceptional circumstances, the District purchases land outright (called the “fee” title) to ensure that a property is available for protection. Owning land in fee comes with significant land management obligations that require substantial staff resources. These obligations can also be expensive and consequently reduce the funds available for conservation of additional land. As such, the District only purchases land in fee with the express intent to eventually transfer it to an appropriate public or private conservation partner who will use the property for park or open space purposes.

Transfers

Most of the properties that the District owns in fee are unique and special wild places that it intends to transfer to a recreational entity to operate as a public park and preserve. A few properties were purchased to ensure their availability for agricultural use or to preserve exceptional natural resources, or both, and are also intended for eventual transfer to a conservation partner.

Under state law, any property interests the District owns must be held in trust for park and/or open space purposes (Public Resources Code § 5565). Once land has been dedicated and

actually used for park and/or open space purposes, the District can only convey that land either (1) to a public agency that undertakes in a recorded written agreement to continue to use the land park and/or open space purposes and not to convey the land without the consent of a majority of the Sonoma County voters or (2) to a private entity with the consent of a majority of Sonoma County voters.

Finally, the District is charged with stewarding these interests for as long as it owns them. Under state law, conservation easements are perpetual and, because the District dedicates its easements to open space under the Public Resources Code, transfers to third parties are strictly limited. (Civil Code § 815.2). Therefore, the District is prepared to manage its portfolio on a long-term basis for the benefit of many generations to come.

This Stewardship Policy (“Policy”) is an update to the Stewardship Manual approved by the District Board of Directors in 2005. As a land conservation organization, the District generally follows the [Land Trust Alliance \(“LTA”\) Standards and Practices](#). The LTA is a nationally recognized authority on the acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements and protected fee lands. As such, this Policy is designed to reflect LTA Standards 11 (Conservation Easement Stewardship) and 12 (Fee Land Stewardship) wherever possible. An excerpt from the 2017 revision of the LTA Standards and Practices is included as Appendix B.

II. CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Easements are only effective in protecting land if they are consistently stewarded. Ongoing easement stewardship involves developing baselines, monitoring easements and undertaking enforcement actions when necessary, as well as processing permitted use and amendment requests. Staff provide technical assistance and resources as appropriate to help landowners in accomplishing their goals for a property, while at the same time ensuring that the landowner's uses and activities are conducted in compliance with the easement. The District may take legal action to address an easement violation, though such action is rarely necessary.

Over the years, the District has also accepted regulatory conservation easements ("open space easements") granted as conditions of approval through the County permitting process. This Policy applies the same standards to open space easements as it does to conservation easements.

Baseline Documentation

Baseline documentation (the "Baseline Report") describes and illustrates the physical condition, features, land uses, and improvements on protected land at the time that the District acquires a conservation easement. The Baseline Report allows for measuring future changes to the land and provides a critical foundation for all future monitoring activities.

Additionally, the Baseline Report is an Internal Revenue Service requirement for landowners seeking a tax benefit for a donation of all or a portion of the conservation easement value, and often is a requirement of grant funding when other funding agencies contribute to an acquisition.

Objective:

Provide objective and accurate documentation of the condition and use of the land and its natural features and improvements at the time the conservation easement is executed and conveyed to the District.

Policies:

1. The District shall endeavor to complete Baseline Reports for all new conservation easements prior to closing.
2. Baseline Reports shall contain objective and accurate descriptions and data regarding the land uses, features, and condition of the property at the time of the conservation easement acquisition, including:

- a. The physical condition and features of the land as they relate to the stated purpose of the conservation easement;
- b. The descriptions of all structures, improvements, land uses, rights of way, and activities;
- c. Photographs documenting property conditions for reference in future easement monitoring; and
- d. A series of maps showing the locations and extents of the easement, any easement designation areas (e.g. building envelopes, natural areas, or agricultural areas), photograph locations, land ownership, latest available aerial imagery, and other relevant information.

Monitoring

Conservation easement monitoring consists of regular on-site inspections of each property protected by a conservation easement. Monitoring is regularly done as a means to avoid or document easement violations, and to ensure the protection of each easement's conservation values. Each monitoring visit is documented with standardized reports and record-keeping procedures that help record the history of the uses, improvements, and condition of the land for informational, compliance, and enforcement purposes.

Objectives:

1. Adequately monitor each conservation easement to ensure compliance with its provisions and to detect and prevent violations.
2. Create and maintain a written record of property conditions and any structures, improvements, land uses, or activities on a property, as well as any correspondence or remedial actions required by the District following monitoring visits.

Policies:

1. The District shall endeavor to monitor its conservation easements on an annual basis, or in accordance with industry standards, which may allow for less frequent on-the-ground monitoring with use of aerial photographs or other remote sensing data.
2. The District shall tailor its monitoring efforts to each conservation easement and shall perform monitoring in a manner appropriate to the size, land uses, and conservation values set forth in each conservation easement.
3. The District shall monitor for compliance with the specific terms and conditions of each easement to ensure protection of the conservation purposes.
4. The District shall endeavor to incorporate appropriate and cost-effective technologies in its monitoring program.
5. Staff shall respect the privacy of residents and landowners to the greatest extent feasible while ensuring that they monitor the property with diligence.

Enforcement

To ensure the preservation of conservation values and safeguard the public investments in these projects, the District must diligently and consistently enforce its conservation easements. By promptly addressing all potential easement violations in accordance with this policy, applicable laws, and the terms and conditions of each easement, the District ensures the success of its conservation program.

When a potential violation is discovered, staff contact the landowner and work as collaboratively as possible to resolve the enforcement issue. Through working in close partnership with landowners, the District achieves the greatest level of compliance with the easement terms. However, the District will take formal legal action if necessary to address easement violations.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that structures, improvements, land uses, conditions, or activities on a protected property are consistent with the applicable conservation easement.
2. Carry out the District's enforcement program in a fair and even-handed manner and uphold those protections embodied within a property's conservation easement.
3. Maintain records that accurately reflect existing easement violations, the District's actions to enforce those violations, and the District's reasoning for its actions.

Policies:

1. The District shall actively steward easements and effectively communicate and work with the original grantor and any successor landowners.
2. The District shall endeavor to quickly and effectively take such measures as necessary to resolve easement violations.
3. When appropriate, the District shall initially work cooperatively with landowners to cure easement violations.
4. When appropriate, the District may initiate legal action to enforce a conservation easement when cooperative efforts have failed or when substantial or irreparable harm has or may occur to conservation values.
5. When appropriate, the District may coordinate its enforcement efforts with other public agencies.

Permitted Use Notices and Permitted Use Requests

Conservation easements allow certain uses and limit or prohibit other uses on a protected property. Allowed uses are sometimes called "Permitted Uses." Some Permitted Uses require

advance written approval by the District, some require only advance notice to the District, while others require neither notice to, nor approval by, the District. When a landowner provides notice to the District of a particular use on the property, the notice is referred to as a “Permitted Use Notice.” When a landowner requests approval for a particular use on the property, that request is referred to as a “Permitted Use Request.” Typically, easements provide a timeframe of 45 days for the District to respond to a notice or request. The following policies and procedures pertain to Permitted Use Notices and Permitted Use Requests.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that structures, improvements, land uses, and activities on a protected property are consistent with the applicable conservation easement.
2. Maintain records that accurately reflect existing permitted uses on District easements, and the District’s reasoning for approving or denying a request.

Policies:

1. The District shall require that Permitted Use Notices and Permitted Use Requests provide all the information necessary for the District to make an informed decision.
2. District shall endeavor to consider and act upon all Permitted Use Notices and Permitted Use Requests in a timely and efficient manner.

Easement Amendments

The success of the District’s program depends on the public’s confidence that the District will meet its obligations to enforce its easements as they are written. Nevertheless, occasionally situations arise where amending a conservation easement is appropriate to further the conservation values or to resolve unforeseen circumstances. In very limited circumstances, the District will pursue an amendment to a conservation easement to clarify language, make a correction, or realize a benefit to the conservation values. This process requires Board of Directors approval.

State law significantly limits the District’s ability to amend its easements. Conservation easements in the State of California are authorized under California Civil Code section 815, which declares that “the preservation of land in its natural, scenic, agricultural, historical, forested, or open–space condition is among the most important environmental assets of California.” Consistent with this policy, in describing the legal effect of a conservation easement, Civil Code section 815.2(b) provides that “a conservation easement shall be perpetual in duration.” Thus, by design, the District’s conservation easements may be amended only as needed to satisfy their intended purposes. Open space easements held by the District are also perpetual under their terms, so the District administers them with similar deference.

The District's discretion to amend its easements is also limited by Public Resources Code section 5540, which establishes additional safeguards with respect to any real property interest that has been dedicated to open space by the District.

Objective:

1. Strictly limit the circumstances under which amendments to conservation easements may be considered so as to ensure compliance with State law, protect the District's goals, and maintain public confidence.
2. Maintain records that accurately reflect existing and pending easements amendments, and the District's reasoning for executing any easement amendment.

Policies:

1. The District may amend easements only where there is a clear benefit to the District and its conservation goals, which may include correction of a technical error.
2. The District may amend easements only where the amendment is consistent with law, adopted District policies, and the conservation purpose of the easement.
3. The District may amend easements to provide for additional protection, provided that such additional protection does not diminish or otherwise impair the conservation values of the land.
4. Only the District's Board of Directors may amend an easement.
5. The Board may approve an amendment (whether initiated by a landowner or the District) only if it makes all of the following findings:
 - a. The amendment is clearly consistent with the conservation purpose of the conservation easement.
 - b. The amendment enhances and otherwise does not impair the conservation values of the land subject to the conservation easement.
 - c. The amendment does not undermine the perpetual nature of the conservation easement.
 - d. The amendment is not precluded by the conservation easement or by state or federal law.
 - e. The amendment does not relinquish to the landowner any interest in land that has been expressly extinguished by the conservation easement, unless the amendment is accomplished as an exchange pursuant to Public Resource Code § 5540.5 so that there is no net loss of conservation value via the transaction.
 - f. The amendment is the minimum change necessary to satisfy the purpose of the amendment.
 - g. The amendment is consistent with the District's Vital Lands Initiative and other applicable District policies in effect at the time of the proposed amendment.
 - h. The amendment is consistent with all applicable land use and zoning regulations.
 - i. The amendment incorporates, to the maximum extent practical and legally

permissible, the language used by the District in most current conservation easement form.

- j. The amendment increases or has no effect on the appraised value of the conservation easement.

In its consideration of an amendment, the Board of Directors must also determine whether the proposed amendment will require approval of the County voters or the California legislature pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5540.

In the event of condemnation or a bona fide threat of condemnation of a conservation easement or a portion thereof, the Board may direct staff to enter into settlement negotiations with the condemning authority and the landowner, as appropriate under the circumstances, to seek settlement in lieu of a judicial order. Because such amendments are involuntary in nature, the procedures described above do not apply.

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III. FEE LANDS

For those properties the District owns in fee, the District shall endeavor to provide for an appropriate level of natural resource management and infrastructure maintenance sufficient to ensure the protection of its investment and of each property's unique conservation values.

The District's intent is not to hold but to transfer its fee lands to other qualified management entities. In each case, the District retains a conservation easement to ensure the protection of its voter-approved sales tax investments.

Property Management

The District manages its fee properties until such time that it transfers or sells the land to a private landowner or recreational entity. This management includes the maintenance and repair of property infrastructure, protection of natural and cultural resources, provisions for agricultural use, and addressing trespassing and other illegal activities.

Objective:

Provide an adequate level of management to ensure fee properties are maintained consistent with the conservation purpose for which they were acquired.

Policies:

1. At the time of a property's acquisition, the District shall endeavor to complete an inventory of existing conditions.
2. The District shall endeavor to address, to the extent practical, any existing safety issues including trespassing and illicit use or dumping.
3. The District shall endeavor to address trespass or other adverse conditions in a timely manner, with assistance from law enforcement as necessary.
4. The District shall endeavor to regularly inspect its fee properties and maintain a written record of property conditions.
5. The District shall endeavor to manage natural resources on its fee lands, including management of invasive species, reduction in fire fuel loads, and the restoration of habitats where appropriate, in consultation with technical experts.
6. For each of its fee properties, the District shall determine the allowable uses and activities, including agricultural uses and any access for research purposes or public recreation uses. Land uses and activities must be compatible with and support both the intent of the acquisition and the conservation values identified at the time of acquisition.

Property Disposition

All of the properties that the District holds in fee are intended to be transferred to new owners who can use the properties for parks or open space. The District will own a property only as long as necessary for a suitable public or private conservation partner to be identified and an appropriate conservation easement developed.

Objective:

1. Dispose of fee interest in all of the District's fee lands.
2. Whenever possible, retain conservation easements with appropriate protections for conservation values and parks and/or open space uses for which the property was acquired.

Policies:

1. When appropriate, the District may transfer its fee lands to other governmental entities, such as cities, the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, for recreation or other open space uses, with the District retaining a conservation easement. The District may also require an affirmative easement or covenant where appropriate.
2. When appropriate, the District will sell the land to a private party or other public entity for agricultural use, natural resource protection, recreation, or other open space purpose, in compliance with state law, and with the District retaining a conservation easement. The District may also require an affirmative easement or covenant where appropriate.
3. For those limited fee properties that have not been dedicated to open space, the District may dispose of such property in an open bid sale following Board approval.

APPENDIX A. 2006 Expenditure Plan

**AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE 2006 EXPENDITURE PLAN**

The purpose of this expenditure plan is to implement the Sonoma County General Plan and the general plans of the County's incorporated cities by preserving agricultural land use and open space. This purpose will be accomplished primarily through the purchase of development rights from willing sellers in areas of the County which are designated in the County and cities' General Plan open space elements and may include the purchase of fee interests for outdoor public recreation where the public use would not be inconsistent with the open space designations listed below.

The open space designations eligible for protection under this expenditure plan include community separators, greenbelts, scenic landscape units, scenic corridors, agriculturally productive lands, biotic habitat areas, riparian corridors and other areas of biotic significance, and other open space projects.

1. Community separators and greenbelts are lands that function as open space to separate cities and other communities and protect city and community identity by providing visual relief from continuous urbanization. These lands are frequently subject to development pressures, and therefore, have been identified as priority sites for acquisition to prevent urban sprawl, to retain the rural and open character of the county and to preserve agricultural uses.
2. Scenic landscape units and scenic corridors are areas of high scenic quality including natural landscapes and backdrops that provide visual relief from urban densities and maintain the open nature of the County.
3. Agriculturally productive lands include working farms and ranches and other lands used for the production of food, fiber, and plant materials and the raising and maintaining of livestock and farm animals.
4. Biotic habitat areas, riparian corridors, and other areas of biotic significance include freshwater and tidal marshes, wetlands, special status species locations, woodlands and forests, wildlife habitat corridors and lands along creeks and streams critical to protecting fisheries and water quality. These sensitive natural areas require protection, restoration, and resource management, and include the Petaluma River, Laguna de Santa Rosa, Russian River, Sonoma Creek and San Pablo Baylands.

5. Other open space projects include, but are not limited to, urban open space and recreation projects within and near incorporated areas and other urbanized areas of Sonoma County. Funds for these projects shall be available to cities, the County and other entities through a matching grant program, with preference given to acquisition and development projects that link communities. Examples of these projects include creek restoration and enhancement, such as along the Petaluma River, Santa Rosa Creek, and Laguna de Santa Rosa, trails, athletic fields, and urban greenspace.

6. Operation and maintenance of land includes limited funding for initial public access, operation and maintenance of recreational lands purchased in accordance with this Plan. No more than 10 percent of total revenues generated over the life of the Measure shall be made available for operation and maintenance purposes.

APPENDIX B. LTA Standards and Practices (2017)

LAND TRUST

Standards and Practices

Ethical and Technical Guidelines for the
Responsible Operation of a Land Trust

Introduction

Land Trust Standards and Practices are the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust. The Land Trust Alliance drafted the first Standards in 1989 at the urging of land trusts and to affirm certain best practices as the surest way to secure lasting conservation. To maintain the land trust community's strength, credibility and effectiveness, the Standards were updated in 1993, 2001 and 2004. In preparing this 2017 update, an advisory team, comprised of land trust professionals from across the country, reviewed and discussed more than 1,600 comments from conservationists throughout the United States. These many voices were an invaluable asset throughout the revision process.

While this document is a publication of the Land Trust Alliance, the Standards are a collective product of the land trust community. The advisory team was as diverse in perspective as the comments the team reviewed. Unanimity was not necessarily achieved on each standard or practice, but this document reflects the expressed values and recommendations of the overall land trust community.

The nation's more than 1,300 nonprofit land trusts have conserved 56 million acres of wildlife habitat, farms, ranches, forests, watersheds, recreation areas and other open spaces as of 2015. The continued success of land trusts depends on public confidence in—and support of—our community as we build conservation programs that stand the test of time. It is, therefore, every land trust's responsibility to uphold this public confidence and ensure the permanence of its conservation efforts. Implementing the Standards positions a land trust to achieve these goals and, if it so wishes, to seek insurance through Terrafirma and pursue accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. (Accreditation indicator elements are marked with ●; Terrafirma enrollment prerequisites are denoted with ■; Elements for both are represented with ▲.)

Each member of the Land Trust Alliance must adopt the Standards as guiding principles for its operations, pledging a commitment to uphold the public confidence and the credibility of the land trust community as a whole. (See the board adoption resolution on page 2.) It is important to note that while the Standards are thorough, they are not exhaustive. There will be times when the Standards do not make clear a land trust's best path forward. In these moments, the land trust's board should exercise its best judgment as informed by the spirit of these Standards.

Land trusts are a respected and integral part of our nation's land conservation work. Together, we must support our peers and hold ourselves to the highest standards as we continue to conserve the places we need and love.

STANDARD 11

Conservation Easement Stewardship

Land trusts have a program of responsible stewardship for their conservation easements.

PRACTICES

A. Funding Conservation Easement Stewardship

1. Estimate the long-term stewardship and enforcement expenses of each conservation easement transaction
2. Track stewardship and enforcement costs

B. Baseline Documentation Report

- 1. For each conservation easement, have a baseline documentation report (■), with written descriptions, maps and photographs, that documents:
 - a. The conservation values protected by the easement
 - b. The relevant conditions of the property as necessary to monitor and enforce the easement
- 2. Prepare the report prior to closing and have it signed by the landowner and land trust at or prior to closing
 - a. In the event that seasonal conditions prevent the completion of a full baseline documentation report by closing, the landowner and land trust sign a schedule for finalizing the full report and an acknowledgement of interim data [that for donations and bargain sales meets Treasury Regulation §1.170A-14(g)(5)(i)] at closing
- 3. When there are significant changes to the land or the conservation easement (such as a result of an amendment or the exercise of a permitted right), document those changes in an appropriate manner, such as through monitoring reports, a baseline supplement or current conditions report

C. Conservation Easement Monitoring

1. Adopt a written policy and/or procedure for monitoring conservation easements that establishes consistent monitoring protocols and recordkeeping procedures
- ▲ 2. Monitor each conservation easement property at least once per calendar year
 - ▲ a. If the land trust uses aerial monitoring, conduct on-the-ground monitoring at least once every five years
 - ▲ b. Promptly document the annual monitoring activities for each conservation easement

D. Landowner Relationships

1. Maintain regular contact with owners of conservation easement properties to maintain relationships and avoid potential easement conflicts
2. Establish systems to track changes in land ownership
3. When the property changes hands, attempt to meet with the new owner or property manager and provide information in writing about the conservation easement and the land trust's stewardship policies and procedures

E. Conservation Easement Enforcement

- 1. Adopt a written policy and develop written procedures for documenting and responding to potential conservation easement violations
- 2. Investigate potential violations in a timely manner and promptly document all actions taken
3. Involve legal counsel as appropriate to the severity of the violation and the nature of the proposed resolution

F. Approvals and Permitted Rights

1. Respond to landowner required notices or requests for interpretation or approvals in a timely and consistent manner, as specified in the conservation easement deed or in a written procedure
2. Establish written procedures to guide the land trust's decision-making if using discretionary approvals or if conservation easement deeds contain such clauses
- 3. Maintain a permanent record of all notices, approvals, denials, interpretations and the exercise of any significant permitted rights

G. Contingency Strategy

1. Take reasonable steps to provide for the disposition of conservation easements in the event the land trust ceases to exist or can no longer steward and administer them

H. Amendments

- 1. Adopt and follow a written policy or procedure addressing conservation easement amendments that is consistent with the Land Trust Alliance Amendment Principles
- 2. Evaluate all conservation easement amendment proposals with due diligence sufficient to satisfy the Amendment Principles
- 3. If an amendment is used to adjust conservation easement boundaries (such as to remedy disputes or encroachment) and results in a *de minimis* extinguishment, document how the land trust's actions address the terms of J.1. below

I. Condemnation

1. If a conservation easement is threatened with condemnation,
 - a. Take steps to avoid or mitigate harm to conservation values and document the actions taken
 - b. Have or obtain appropriate documentation of the percentage of the full value of the property represented by the conservation easement
 - c. Document the land trust's attempts to receive its proportional share of the proceeds and use any proceeds in a manner consistent with the conservation easement deed

J. Partial or Full Extinguishment

- 1. In the rare case that it is necessary to extinguish a conservation easement, in whole or in part,
 - a. Follow the terms of the conservation easement with respect to taking appropriate action, and obtain judicial or regulatory review when required by law or specified in the easement deed
 - b. Ensure there is no private inurement or impermissible private benefit
 - c. Take steps to avoid or mitigate harm to conservation values and/or use any proceeds in a manner consistent with the conservation easement deed
 - d. Consider the land trust's actions in the context of its reputation and the impact on the land conservation community at large

STANDARD 12

Fee Land Stewardship

Land trusts have a program of responsible stewardship for the land held in fee for conservation purposes.

PRACTICES

A. Funding Land Stewardship

1. Determine the immediate financial and management implications of each conservation property acquisition and estimate the long-term implications
2. Anticipate and track costs associated with long-term land management, stewardship and enforcement of conservation properties

B. Land Management and Stewardship

- 1. Develop a written land management plan for each conservation property (■) within 12 months after acquiring the land to:
 - a. Identify the property's conservation values, including any significant cultural and natural features or those that have significant community value
 - b. Identify the overall management goals for the property
 - c. Identify activities to achieve the goals and to reduce any risks or threats to the conservation values
 - d. Specify the uses that are appropriate for the property, in keeping with the property's conservation values, any restrictions and donor or funder requirements
 - i. Provide public access opportunities as appropriate to the property and the land trust's mission
- 2. Manage each conservation property in accordance with its management plan, and review and update the plan as necessary
- 3. Perform administrative duties (such as paying insurance, filing required forms, keeping records) in a timely and responsible manner
- 4. Maintain the property in a manner that retains the land trust's public credibility, manages community expectations and minimizes risk

C. Inspecting Land Trust Properties

1. Determine the boundaries of land trust properties and physically mark them to the extent possible or necessary
- 2. Inspect properties at least once per calendar year for potential management problems and promptly document the inspection
- 3. Address management problems, including encroachments, trespass and other ownership challenges, in an appropriate and timely manner and document the actions taken

D. Contingency Strategy

1. Take reasonable steps to provide for the continuing protection of conservation properties in the event the land trust ceases to exist or can no longer own or manage them

E. Condemnation

1. If a conservation property is threatened with condemnation, take steps to avoid or mitigate harm to conservation values and document the actions taken

The Land Trust Alliance's mission is to save the places people love by strengthening land conservation across America.

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people love and need by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents more than 1,000 member land trusts supported by more than 100,000 volunteers and 5 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C. and operates several regional offices. More information about the Alliance is available at www.landtrustalliance.org.

The Land Trust Alliance provides resources to assist land trusts in implementing *Land Trust Standards and Practices*. General information on the Standards and on Alliance publications and training programs related to their implementation can be found at www.landtrustalliance.org. Alliance member land trusts and partners can find additional technical information and sample documents on The Learning Center at <http://tlc.lta.org>.



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AG + OPEN SPACE FEE LANDS STRATEGY UPDATE

JANUARY 29, 2020 -- DRAFT

DRAFT

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I. BACKGROUND

The voters of Sonoma County created the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (“Ag + Open Space”) in 1990 to permanently protect the diverse agricultural, natural resource, and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations. Funding is provided through the collection of a ¼ percent sales tax. Ag + Open Space’s enabling legislation and Expenditure Plan direct Ag + Open Space to protect land primarily through acquisition and stewardship of conservation easements. In 2006, the Sonoma County voters reauthorized the sales tax through approval of Measure F, known as the *Sonoma County Open Space, Clean Water, and Farmland Protection Measure*. The *2006 Expenditure Plan* describes how Ag + Open Space may spend the voter-approved sales tax revenue. To date, Ag + Open Space has permanently protected more than 114,000 acres of land, more than 10% of the land area in Sonoma County, through acquisition of conservation easements [REDACTED]. On (date), 2020, the Board approved the *Ag + Open Space Vital Lands Initiative*, which will guide land protection activities in support of Agriculture, Community Identity, Healthy Communities, Water, and Wildlands over the next decade through to the end of Measure F.

Sometimes, Ag + Open Space must purchase land in fee to ensure its protection. Ag + Open Space’s current fee land holdings ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]) include mountaintops and ridgelines with spectacular views of the Sonoma coast and interior valleys, mixed evergreen forests, grasslands, riparian corridors critical to Coho salmon and steelhead trout populations, vernal pools and other wetlands that support California tiger salamander and special-status plant species, small farms and historic cattle ranches, culturally important plant populations, and open space properties that create a greenbelt around urban areas and allow groundwater recharge. Most fee properties support some type of agricultural use. Detailed information about each of Ag + Open Space’s current fee lands, including the original acquisition intent and key conservation values on each property is provided as an Appendix.

Responsible stewardship of Ag + Open Space-owned properties is significantly more expensive per acre than stewardship of conservation easements, requiring substantial funding for land management and maintenance tasks, and presenting liability issues. Because of these costs, and the time-limited nature of the sales tax funding measure, the Ag + Open Space Board of Directors approved the initial *District Fee Lands Strategy* on November 20, 2012, which called for the transfer or sale of all fee properties within its land management portfolio. At that time, Ag + Open Space owned approximately 7,500 acres of land. Since then, Ag + Open Space has conveyed numerous properties, comprising approximately 3,400 acres, to various entities while

retaining conservation easements and other related interests to ensure permanent protection of the Sonoma County taxpayers' investment.

This update to the *Fee Lands Strategy* includes:

- A description of Ag + Open Space's current land management practices
- A strategy for conveying all Ag + Open Space fee lands by 2031, including a timeline for implementation

DRAFT

II. LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Ag + Open Space manages its fee lands to protect the ecological integrity and conservation values of each property, in accordance with the original intent of the acquisition. The goal of our fee land management is to maintain infrastructure and manage natural resources until the property is conveyed to the new owner.

Responsible land management includes tasks associated with the stewardship of natural resources, protection of public safety, avoidance of liability, and maintenance of property infrastructure. Ag + Open Space staff and trained volunteers inspect each property on a regular basis to check current conditions and identify necessary maintenance or adaptive management tasks.

Ag + Open Space uses a transparent competitive bid process for fee land service contracts, including for any significant land stewardship tasks. Ag + Open Space seeks to work with the service provider that can provide the best service possible on a particular project for a competitive price. This may be a licensed contractor or other professional, a governmental agency, a non-governmental organization, or other service provider. Currently, Ag + Open Space contracts with a variety of entities to assist in the stewardship of fee properties.

Maintenance of Property Infrastructure

Immediately after acquiring a property in fee, Ag + Open Space inspects the property to document any existing safety issues, such as trespassing, illicit use, and dumping, so they can be promptly and appropriately addressed. Where necessary, the property boundary is confirmed, and perimeter fencing is installed, along with Ag + Open Space signage.

Infrastructure maintenance activities include repair of structures, fences, and roads, water system maintenance, erosion control, removal of trash and debris, and response to encampments and other trespass-related activities. Ag + Open Space assesses roads and other infrastructure for potential to cause erosion and adversely affect streams, wetlands, and other sensitive habitats within the watershed. Ag + Open Space consults with technical experts to inform adopted best management practices.

Ag + Open Space staff, volunteers, and consultants routinely monitor all fee land properties for evidence of trespass and unauthorized uses and activities, and staff takes prompt action to address any observed issues. Such action may include communication with neighbors and other property users, posting signage, cleaning up debris and repairing damage. In some cases, Ag + Open Space has developed specific protocols for addressing certain trespass and illegal

uses. For example, when a trespass encampment is discovered on an Ag + Open Space property, the appropriate law enforcement agency is contacted. Law enforcement posts a notice telling the occupants of the encampment they must pack their belongings and remove themselves from the premises. After camp occupants have left the site, Ag + Open Space staff then immediately arranges for a maintenance contractor to assist with clearing out any debris left behind.

When volunteers or Ag + Open Space staff suspect that an active *Cannabis* grow operation is present on a property, local law enforcement is contacted immediately. All debris is removed as soon as the grow area can be safely accessed. Subsequent to discovering a trespass *Cannabis* operation our staff may implement various deterrence strategies, including installing signs indicating that the property is under surveillance and posting signs along the suspected access route to the grow operation. Known past grow sites are monitored for new activity in coordination with law enforcement agencies.

Natural Resources Management

Ag + Open Space manages its lands to preserve and enhance the health of natural ecosystems, paying particular attention to sensitive resources and habitats. Ag + Open Space collaborates with partner agencies and organizations to coordinate and plan regional-scale natural resource management, apply for shared funding, and gather and share the best available spatial data and local expertise to support natural resource management planning and project implementation throughout the County. Ag + Open Space manages natural resources on its fee-title properties primarily through habitat enhancement, mowing, understory thinning and prescribed burning, removal of invasive species, and grazing.

Habitat enhancement or restoration projects are undertaken when there is a compelling reason to invest resources to not just maintain, but enhance habitats to further the conservation values of the properties. Examples might include habitat enhancement actions to implement Coho salmon recovery objectives as called for in a federal or state approved management plan, or repair and revegetation of an eroded streambank to reduce sediment delivery to a watershed system.

Annual mowing typically occurs around structures and parking areas, along internal and access roads and the property perimeter if appropriate, and in areas where mowing is the preferred method for invasive species removal. Mowing only occurs after Ag + Open Space staff or a qualified consultant conducts a nesting bird survey in the area to be mowed to ensure no birds or nests are present. If nesting birds are present, an appropriate buffer zone is established and mowing is postponed within this zone until the birds fledge and leave the nest.

Ag + Open Space creates shaded fuel breaks through understory thinning and utilizes prescribed burning as tools where appropriate to reduce fuel loads while also enhancing habitat for native plants and animals. Shaded fuel breaks are typically developed along existing roads and are planned in coordination with Cal Fire to ensure their location is operationally effective and consistent with regional fuel break planning. Shaded fuel breaks retain overstory forest canopy while removing smaller understory material that may serve as ladder fuels and contribute to higher fire intensity. While they can be effective in slowing or stopping the spread of a non-wind-driven wildfire, their primary purpose is to allow safe access and appropriately prepared conditions for firefighting personnel to access an area for suppression activities or to use as a control line for a prescribed burn. Ag + Open Space works with Registered Professional Foresters and tribal, biological, and cultural resource consultants as needed to ensure shaded fuel breaks and other forest thinning activities are ecologically appropriate and avoid impacts to sensitive resources.

Ag + Open Space is planning to implement prescribed burns on some of its properties in coordination with Cal Fire. These activities are subject to permitting requirements from Cal Fire, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and other regulatory agencies, as appropriate. Prescribed burns are intended to improve native species composition and habitat, reduce hazardous fuels, control invasive species, and improve and maintain resiliency of natural lands to wildfire, climate change, and other extreme events. Significant public outreach and community and tribal involvement are undertaken prior to any planned burn, and educational outings are planned in conjunction with prescribed burning to enable the community to learn about and observe the goals and effects of prescribed fire first hand.

Ag + Open Space takes aggressive action to identify and manage invasive species populations on its fee lands, prior to transferring a property to the next owner for permanent conservation. Any invasive species occurrences observed during routine monitoring visits can be proactively managed in a manner tailored to the needs of each property. Control methods include but are not limited to: hand-pulling; seasonally timed mowing or grazing, including intensive rotational grazing; propane torch flaming during wet conditions; prescribed burning; and herbicide application. To the greatest extent possible, invasive plant control efforts are also designed to enhance habitat for native plants and animals and can include measures such as replanting with native vegetation to facilitate habitat restoration and discourage recolonization by invasive plants.

Ag + Open Space is committed to avoiding the use of synthetic pesticides in sensitive areas and, to support this commitment, has compiled all known information regarding sensitive species and habitats that occur on its properties. Ag + Open Space implements an integrated approach in which synthetic pesticides are used conservatively and only as necessary, and will not use a synthetic pesticide unless: 1) there is no other option available to control an extreme infestation, 2) the environmental benefit is clear and outweighs the negative impacts of

continued weed infestation, 3) only licensed professionals are involved in the application, 4) there is minimal risk of harmful exposure to humans or to sensitive resources, and 5) the application is part of an intentional strategy to transition over time to alternative methods of invasive species control such as mechanical removal, grazing, or prescribed burning.

If it is determined that a synthetic pesticide is appropriate to use in a specific situation, all precautions are taken to minimize exposure beyond the targeted species of concern. For example, if synthetic pesticides will be used near a road that may be accessed by authorized persons such as volunteer patrollers or Ag + Open Space contractors, signs will be posted at either end of the treated area to identify the date of treatment, chemical name, and “no-entry” period per the product label recommendations.

In addition to invasive plants, Ag + Open Space also monitors and manages for other pest types, including pathogens and insects such as bees or wasps. Ag + Open Space staff and contractors follow protocols to prevent the spread of pathogens such as Sudden Oak Death, and work with contractors to remove and relocate bee, wasp, and yellow jacket hives without the use of chemicals.

Agricultural Use

Ag + Open Space leases out a portion of most of its properties for grazing or vegetable farming. The majority of leases are for grazing. Ag + Open Space uses grazing to reduce fuels, support local agricultural producers, and as a tool to manage invasive plant species and enhance habitat for native plants and animals. Ag + Open Space has worked with a Certified Rangeland Manager to assess the grazing potential for all our fee lands. This assessment includes ranking the forage quality of the vegetation, evaluating access to the property, determining adequate stocking rates, recommending suitable livestock type, and advising on any need to limit grazing during particular seasons. Unfortunately, some Ag + Open Space-owned properties are difficult to access, lack infrastructure and water supply, have low forage production, or are subject to constraints related to sensitive habitats and protected species. Because of this, large-scale or property-wide grazing may not be suitable on some properties. However, Ag + Open Space endeavors to make grazing leases available whenever appropriate and may expand the use of short-duration, seasonally timed prescriptive grazing for vegetation and fuels management on a property-specific basis. Ag + Open Space will continue to engage with partner agencies, non-governmental organizations, and consultants that have expertise in livestock grazing and adaptive management approaches.

Public access

Due to a lack of developed recreational infrastructure and amenities, and unsafe conditions for vehicular access to many of its properties, Ag + Open Space provides only limited public access to its fee lands. However, Ag + Open Space endeavors to make public access available whenever possible, where it is appropriate and safe.

Ag + Open Space contracts with service providers to provide numerous outings each year on its fee land properties, as well as on some easement properties. These outings range from nature hikes and bird walks to kayaking and family-themed tours of agricultural operations. Public outings are frequently enhanced by partnerships with other organizations such as community groups, agencies, schools, and tribes.

Property-specific volunteer patrol programs are in effect at Carrington Coast Ranch, Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve, Paulin Creek Open Space Preserve, and Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve. Approximately 550 trained volunteers currently participate in these programs, and trainings for new volunteers generally take place twice per year.

Additionally, Ag + Open Space grants access to scientific or academic institutions interested in conducting research to inform natural resource protection. This research can assist Ag + Open Space in prioritizing management activities and enhancing best management practices on its properties.

III. FEE LANDS STRATEGY

When compared to easement stewardship, fee land stewardship requires substantial funding for necessary land management and maintenance, and presents additional liability issues. Associated fee land stewardship costs generally include one-time costs (capital improvements, habitat enhancements, and related planning) and annual costs (ongoing land management and the cost of providing interim public access) for as many years as Ag + Open Space retains ownership. Unfortunately, Ag + Open Space has retained ownership of many properties for longer periods than anticipated, because the agencies initially slated to own these properties (state and local park systems) have been less able to accept fee title transfers during recent years.

Ongoing costs will become an even greater burden once the current sales tax measure ends. To ensure continued financial stability, it is critical that Ag + Open Space has conveyed all of its fee title lands to appropriate new owners by 2031.

Ag + Open Space has developed a tiered priority system for conveying fee lands. Tier 1 properties are those fee-owned lands for which a suitable future owner has been identified and for which there are fewest impediments to transfer. Approximately 2,900 acres of Ag + Open Space fee properties are identified as Tier 1 properties that are currently slated for conveyance to another entity for long-term ownership, operations and maintenance. Tier 2 includes approximately 1,200 acres of properties that do not yet have an identified future owner. The Tier 2 properties are categorized into two groups, Agricultural Lands and Resource/Recreational Lands. Staff has identified the conservation values on these properties and is developing conservation tools and strategies for each property. Staff recommendations for transfer of Tier 2 properties will incorporate input from Ag + Open Space Advisory Committee, Fiscal Oversight Commission, stakeholders, and the general public.

The Ag + Open Space Board of Directors has provided the following direction since their November 20, 2012, approval of the initial *District Fee Lands Strategy* document:

- On October 15, 2013, the Board directed Ag + Open Space to move Carrington Coast Ranch, Occidental Road Wetlands, and East Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail Parcel to Tier 1. The first two will be transferred to Regional Parks and the third is proposed for transfer to State Parks.
- On February 2, 2016, the Board updated its *Initial Public Access, Operation and Maintenance Policy* to clarify the implementation of the Expenditure Plan relating to operations and maintenance expenditures. Under this updated Policy, entities receiving

transfer of fee title of a recreational property may be reimbursed for up to three years of eligible operations and maintenance expenses.

- On February 21, 2017, the Board directed Ag + Open Space to move Wright Hill Ranch and Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve to Tier 1, for transfer to Regional Parks.
- On (date), 2020, the Board adopted the Ag + Open Space Vital Lands Initiative, which calls for transfer all fee lands by 2031

Conveyance Options

There are three primary conveyance options: transfer to a public entity for park or open space purposes, exchange for other property, and sale. Ag + Open Space's discretion to convey properties is limited by provisions of the California Government Code and the Public Resources Code, which restrict conveyance of property, particularly those properties that have been formally dedicated pursuant to the Public Resources Code to park or open space purposes.

indicates which Ag + Open Space properties have been dedicated in this manner.

Conveyance must also be done in conformity with existing partner and grant funding restrictions and the Sonoma County General Plan. In most cases, Ag + Open Space will retain a conservation easement that protects the identified conservation values of a property in perpetuity. Additional land conservation tools that may be utilized include trail easements, affirmative covenants, and/or deed restrictions.

- **Transfer to Public Entity for Park or Open Space Purposes**

In this option, Ag + Open Space may transfer fee title to another public entity for park or open space purposes, while retaining a conservation easement.

Lands dedicated to open space may be transferred to a public entity provided that the entity undertakes the obligation (in a recorded instrument) to continue to use the property for park or open space use in perpetuity and not to convey the property without the consent of a majority of the voters of Sonoma County. (Public Resources Code section 5540.6)

- **Exchange with Public or Private Entity**

Ag + Open Space may transfer fee title to a property to a public or private entity in exchange for other land or interests in other land of equal or greater value. If Ag + Open Space land has been dedicated to park or open space purposes, an exchange is only permitted by a unanimous vote of the Ag + Open Space Board of Directors following its determination that the land to be acquired is of equal or greater value and is necessary to be acquired for park or open-space purposes, or both. (Public Resources Code section 5540.5) Under state law, the property Ag + Open Space receives through the exchange must be adjacent to other Ag + Open Space property and Ag + Open Space can exchange up to 40 acres of dedicated land per year. (Public Resources Code section 5540.5 (c)) There are no size limits on exchanges of undedicated land.

- **Sale to Public or Private Entity**

Ag + Open Space may sell land to a public or private entity. Outright sales of Ag + Open Space land are subject to State surplus property law and procedures, which require Ag + Open Space to offer properties for sale to specific public entities before proceeding with a sale to any single public or private buyer.

Typically, property sales are for the market-value of the property, taking into account the value of the conservation easement and any other interests in the property that Ag + Open Space retains. The value received by Ag + Open Space may be comprised of cash compensation, a conservation easement, affirmative covenant, other interests in the land, or a combination thereof.

There are different rules for selling land that has been dedicated to park or open space purposes than for undedicated land. If the property has been dedicated to park or open space purposes, a sale to a private entity must be approved by a majority of Sonoma County voters or by a joint resolution of the State Legislature adopted after a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. (Public Resources Code section 5540) If the property has been dedicated to park or open space purposes, a sale to a public agency is permitted under the same procedures as transfers to public agencies described above. (Public Resources Code section 5540.6)

Conveyance Process

The process to transfer a property begins with Ag + Open Space designing a conservation project that will ensure permanent preservation of the most important conservation resources on the property. This information from a resource assessment helps staff craft the terms of a conservation easement, and sometimes other legal documents, to accomplish our perpetual conservation goals for the property. Staff also develop transfer, purchase, or sale agreements with the prospective new owners that govern how the transfer or sale will take place.

Conservation easements are perpetual documents, created by a property deed, that restrict what all future landowners can do on the property. This document also gives Ag + Open Space the right to monitor and enforce the terms of the agreement. Conservation easements are

sometimes accompanied by an affirmative covenant – another type of legal document that requires the future owners to take certain actions on the property, like opening the property for public recreation or ensuring that some portion is used for agriculture.

Transfer agreements and purchase and sale agreements govern how the property will be transferred from Ag + Open Space to its new owner. It generally includes key terms like timelines, purchase price (if applicable), conditions that have to be satisfied before transfer, and who will pay for certain closing costs. In some cases, limited, short-term payments for operations and maintenance of a transferred recreational property may be part of the transfer agreement.

At the same time that conservation and transaction documents are drafted, Ag + Open Space also prepares a baseline documentation report, which documents existing property conditions, uses, and infrastructure at the time of closing. These documents are used in the future to monitor and enforce the terms of the conservation easement.

The conservation easement deed and any associated affirmative covenants or agreements are recorded at the Sonoma County Recorder's office at the time of transfer. Once fee title transfer is complete, Ag + Open Space stewardship of the conservation easement begins and continues in perpetuity. Easement stewardship includes regularly monitoring the property and communicating with the landowner, processing landowner requests to do or build things on the property, and following up on landowner compliance with easement terms. Ag + Open Space has the right to pursue legal action to enforce the terms of the easement, if necessary.

Conveyance Timeline

Implementation of the Fee Lands Strategy is anticipated to occur in phases. Exact timing of property transfers will depend on funding and staffing resources of both Ag + Open Space and the receiving entity. Each property-specific transaction will be brought back to the Board of Directors for independent consideration and approval.

Proposed timeline for conveyance of Tier 1 properties:

- Carrington Coast Ranch and Haroutunian North by July 1, 2020
- Wright Hill Ranch, East Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail Parcel, and Calabazas Creek by July 1, 2021
- Occidental Road, Ceanothus/Auberge, and Keegan-Coppin by July 1, 2022

Proposed timeline for conveyance of Tier 2 properties:

- Conveyance of all remaining agricultural lands by July 1, 2024
- Conveyance of all remaining natural resource/recreational lands by July 1, 2028

TABLE 1. CURRENT PORTFOLIO OF AG + OPEN SPACE FEE LAND PROPERTIES

Table 1**Current Portfolio of Ag + Open Space Fee Land Properties****CE=conservation easement**

Property	Acres	Status	Ag use	Public access	Conservation values	Perpetual Conservation tool	Designated recipient entity
Tier 1 - Properties with identified recipient entity or organization, confirmed via Board action (date)							
Haroutunian North (November 2012)	18	CE and affirmative ag agreement pending.	Cultivation- leased by vegetable farmer. Farm stand.	Farm stand	Ag, Scenic, Greenbelt	Transfer with CE, affirmative ag agreement	Private farmer
Carrington Ranch (October 2015)	335	CE and rec covenant pending. Historic house and buildings.	Grazing planned	Volunteer patrol, outings	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec	Transfer with CE, Rec Covenant	County Regional Parks
Calabazas Creek (February 2017)	1290	Burned in 2017 Nuns Fire.	Leased by grazer	Volunteer patrol, outings	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec	Transfer with CE, Rec Covenant	County Regional Parks
Wright Hill (February 2017)	1236	Historic house and buildings.	Leased by grazer	Outings	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec	Transfer with CE, Rec Covenant	County Regional Parks
East Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail Parcel (October 2013)	22	Trail constructed, operated by Jack London Park Partners	None due to access limitation.	Access through Jack London State Park, scheduled outings via Sonoma Ecology Center	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec	Transfer with CE, Rec Covenant	State Parks (Jack London)
Occidental Road (October 2015)	16	Regional Parks regular maintenance checks, cleanup	Grazing planned	Outings, informal access	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec, Greenbelt	Quitclaim	County Regional Parks
Proposed additions to Tier 1 list, staff to recommend at upcoming Board meeting							
Keegan-Coppin (Proposed April 2020)	24	Damage due to fire break line constructed by CalFire for 2017 Nuns Fire.	Leased by grazer	Closed. Adjacent to Annadel State Pk	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec, Greenbelt	Transfer with CE, Rec Covenant	County Regional Parks
Ceanothus/Auberge (Proposed April 2020)	66	Burned in 2017 Nuns Fire	None due to access limitation.	Closed. Adjacent to Hood Reg Park	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec, Greenbelt	Quitclaim	County Regional Parks
Tier 2 - Recipient entity or organization not yet identified							
Ho	30	seasonal wetland and grassland habitat	Leased by grazer	None	Ag, Natural Res, Scenic, Greenbelt	potential resell with mandatory agricultural easement	To be determined - Agricultural

Table 1

Property	Acres	Status	Ag use	Public access	Conservation values	Perpetual Conservation tool	Designated recipient entity
Oken	76	Riparian Restoration (fencing/planting/erosion repair) in process. Shelter/barn structure.	Leased by grazer	None	Ag, Natural Res, Scenic, Greenbelt	potential resell with mandatory agricultural easement	To be determined - Agricultural
Young Armos	45	Agreement with neighbors on potential incubator farm design, do not have an organization willing to operate/sponsor	Grazing planned for Summer 2020	Adjacent to Sonoma Water creek channel/City of Rohnert Park-operated multi-use trail	Ag, Natural Res, Scenic, Greenbelt	potential resell with mandatory agricultural easement	To be determined - Agricultural
Haroutunian South	21	vernal pools, confirmed presence of Sonoma sunshine and California tiger salamander	Grazing lease executed, to begin Summer 2020	Laguna Foundation-led research, survey outings	Ag, Natural Res, Scenic, Greenbelt	potential resell with mandatory agricultural easement	To be determined - Agricultural
San Francisco Archdiocese	28	vernal pool and grassland habitat, likely presence of California tiger salamander	two separate grazing leases (one on either side of Sonoma Water flood control channel)	Adjacent to Sonoma Water creek channel service road/multi-use trail	Ag, Natural Res, Scenic, Greenbelt	potential resell with mandatory agricultural easement	To be determined - Agricultural
Dogbane	3	Burned in 2017 Tubbs Fire, supports robust population of culturally important Dogbane plant	None due to toxicity of dogbane plant to livestock	Guided cultural outings and workdays	Natural Res, Scenic, Greenbelt	potential ownership transfer, retain conservation easement	To be determined - Cultural
Saddle Mountain	960	Board approval of Management Plan September 2019	Grazing planned for Spring 2021	Volunteer patrol, and guided outings and workdays	Natural Res, Scenic, Rec	potential ownership transfer, retain conservation easement and recreational covenant	To be determined - Recreational
Paulin Creek	9	Conservation Corps North Bay under contract for vegetation management	None	Volunteer patrol, and guided outings and workdays	Natural Res, Rec	potential ownership transfer, retain conservation easement and recreational covenant	To be determined - Recreational

FIGURE 1. MAP OF AG + OPEN SPACE PROTECTED LANDS

FIGURE 2. MAP OF AG + OPEN SPACE FEE LANDS

APPENDIX. PORTFOLIO OF AG + OPEN SPACE FEE LANDS

Auberge Ceanothus Preserve

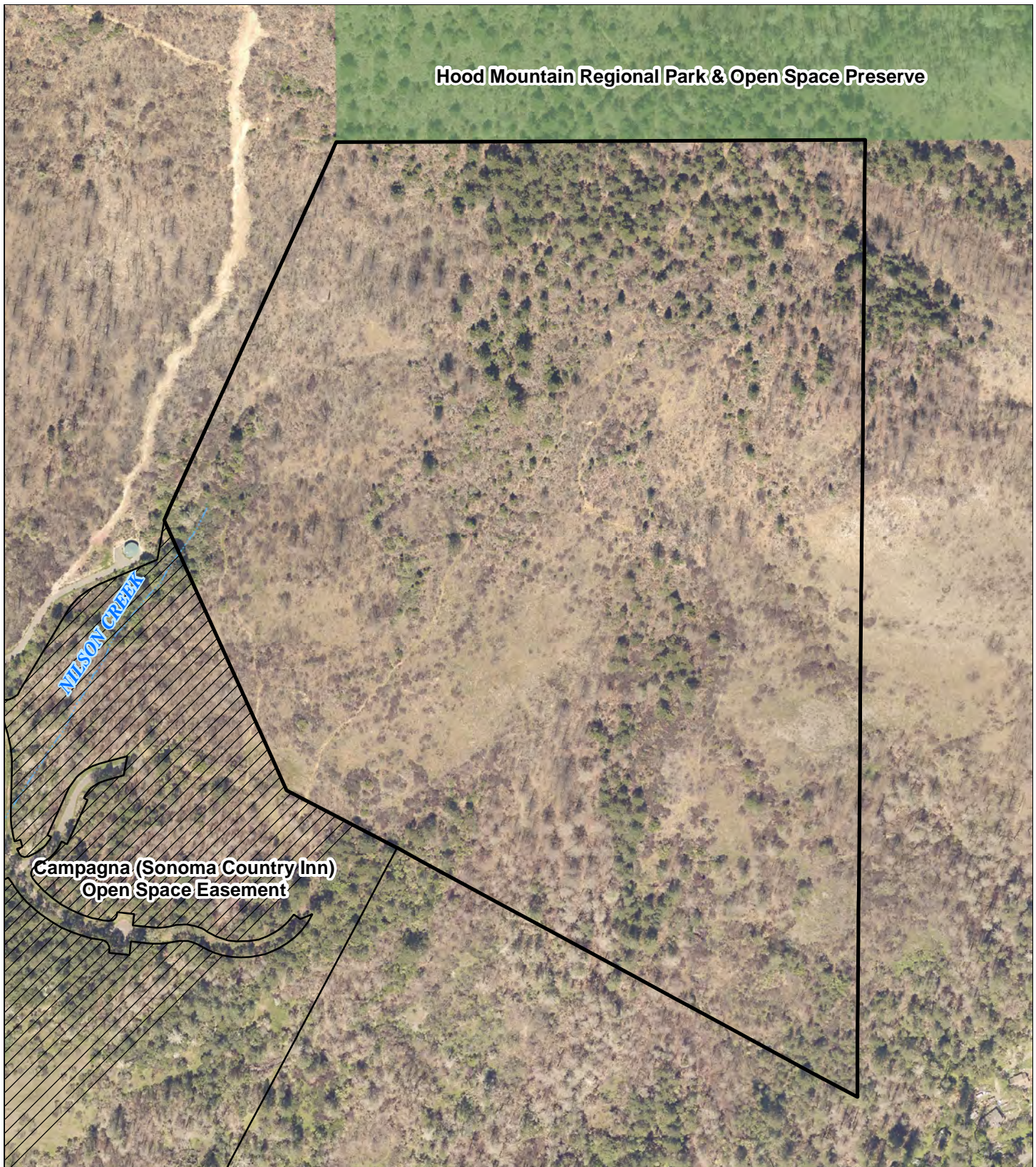
Property Facts

- 65.5 acres
- Located near Kenwood, adjacent to Hood Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve
- Date acquired: 12/20/2011
- Acquisition price: fee title donation



The former landowner of the Auberge Ceanothus Preserve donated the property as a condition of approval for a nearby development project. Ag + Open Space believes the property was intended for donation to Regional Parks, however due to clerical error, ownership was transferred to Ag + Open Space.

Auberge Ceanothus Preserve borders Hood Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve. The site supports a population of at least one rare plant species, *Ceanothus sonomensis* (Sonoma ceanothus), along with other chaparral plants, oaks, and wildflowers. The entirety of the property burned in the 2017 Nuns Fire at low to moderate intensity; no significant negative ecological impacts are expected.



Auberge Ceanothus Preserve

Fee Land Site Map







**AG +
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SPACE**
SONOMA COUNTY

Map Date: 1/9/2020
Sources: Pictometry International & Sonoma County,
Spring 2018 (aerial); Sonoma County GIS (roads,
parcels); SCWA (streams).
This map displays GIS data for illustrative purposes
only and is not intended to depict definitive property
boundaries or feature locations.

0 250 500
Feet



-  Intermittent Stream
-  Other Protected Land
-  Other Ag + Open Space Holding
-  Property Boundary

Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve

Property Facts

- 1290 acres
- Located near Glen Ellen, east of Highway 12
- Date acquired: 12/1/2004
- Acquisition price: \$9,115,000. Previous landowners contributed a \$100,000 endowment to State Parks Foundation.

Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve) was purchased under the Recreation category in Ag + Open Space's 2000 Acquisition Plan. The acquisition was intended to provide recreational opportunities while protecting unique natural habitats and scenic areas. The property has been dedicated to open space.

Ownership of the Preserve was originally intended to transfer to State Parks (the property is included in the General Plan for Sugarloaf Ridge State Park), but Parks later declined to receive transfer of fee title. Currently, ownership of the Preserve is scheduled for transfer to Sonoma County Regional Parks by July of 2021.

A management plan was completed and adopted by the Ag + Open Space Board of Directors in 2017. In addition to providing natural habitats ranging from redwood forest to oak woodland to chaparral, the portion of Calabazas Creek that flows through the Preserve is critical habitat for federally-listed threatened Steelhead. The Preserve offers a diversity of cultural features and natural habitats, along with an unpaved road currently being used as a trail.

The Preserve is open to the public through docent-led outings. These outings vary from guided nature and bird walks, to presentations about the rich cultural history of the property and are always well attended.

Ag + Open Space has established a dedicated Volunteer Patrol on the property, comprised primarily of neighbors and other residents of the Sonoma Valley. These trained volunteers hike the Preserve regularly and report property conditions and suspicious and unusual activities to Ag + Open Space. In addition, Patrol members provide valuable resource information, including the locations of interesting landforms, downed trees, and new infestations of invasive species. In addition to patrolling the Preserve, volunteers have provided valuable services (in close coordination with our staff) in the form of channel clearing, weed management, arboriculture services, and cleanup of cannabis operations from steep and remote sites.

In 2005 Ag + Open Space completed a road assessment identifying prescriptions for improving road conditions through the Preserve and reducing sediment delivery to Calabazas Creek. After a 2006 storm event, which registered as a 100-year discharge event at one station on Sonoma

Creek,¹ Ag + Open Space completed an emergency road repair funded by a FEMA grant. Ag + Open Space completed additional road work near the trailhead on Nuns Canyon Road in 2010. Our organization is currently seeking grant funding to improve the North Road along the upper portion of the Preserve.

Ag + Open Space contracts for mowing, road repair, and debris removal on the Preserve. We have worked with several consultants for many years to manage yellow star thistle, French broom, and eucalyptus. Ag + Open Space, along with consultants and volunteers, has actively been treating the Preserve's three most impactful and invasive species, yellow star thistle, French broom, and Himalayan blackberry. Invasive species management services are provided by volunteers and through contract.

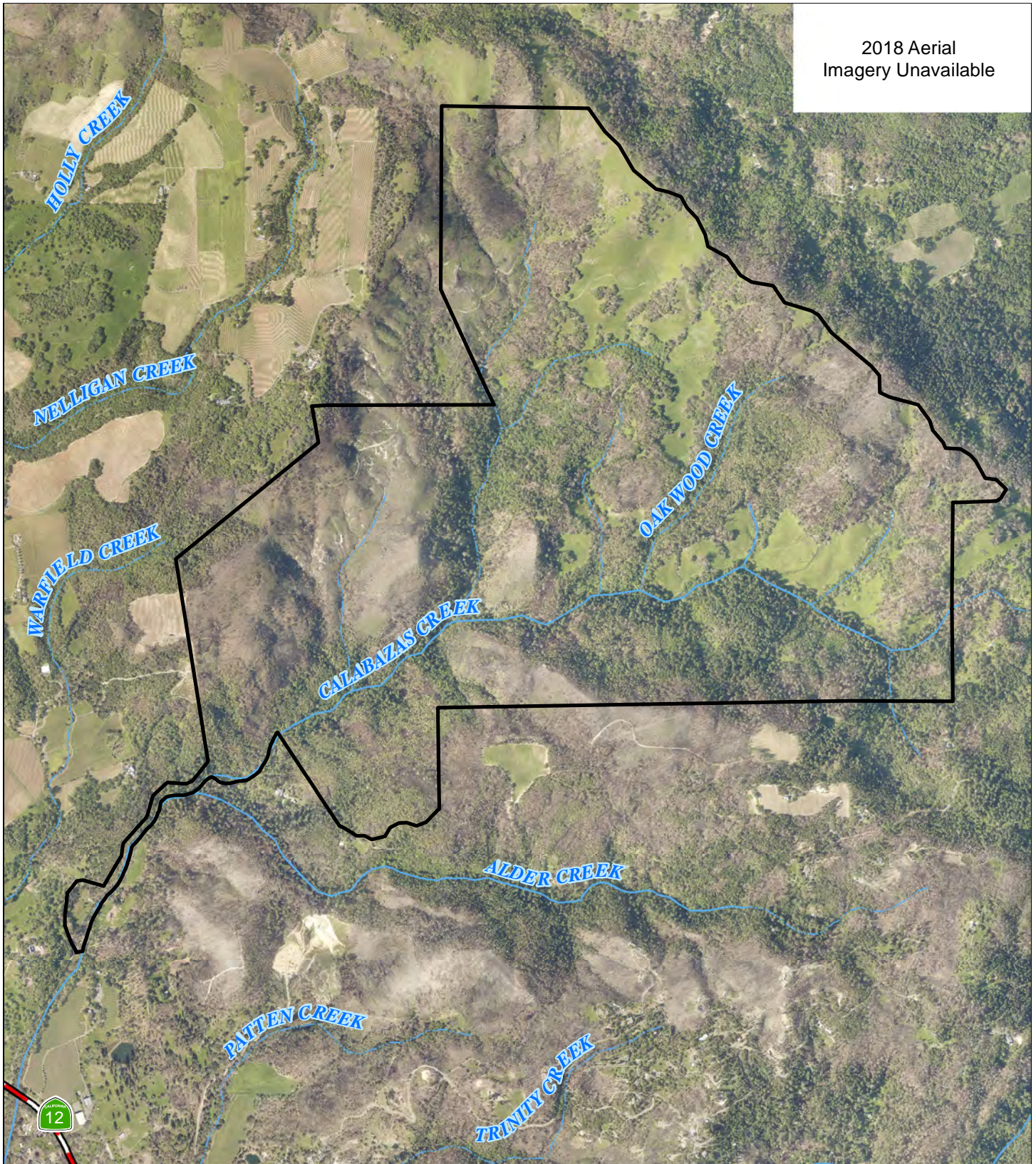
We have partnered with the California State Parks and the Bay Area Ridge Trail to plan preliminary trail alignments. The proposed trail will complete a portion of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Ag + Open Space has also received a \$100,000 planning grant from the Coastal Conservancy towards planning this Ridge Trail segment. Ag + Open Space will work with Regional Parks to finalize trail alignments.

This property was entirely burned in the October 2017 Nuns Fire, which was documented by Cal Fire as having ignited across Calabazas Creek from the Preserve. Ag + Open Space has partnered with Sonoma Land Trust, Audubon Canyon Ranch, California State Parks, Sonoma County Regional Parks, and the Sonoma Mountain Ranch Preservation Foundation to form the Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative. The Preserve is part of the approximately 18,000 acres in the northern Sonoma Valley and adjacent hills owned and managed by the members of the Collaborative. The Collaborative works closely with Cal Fire and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria to plan and coordinate regional vegetation and fuel management projects and to apply for shared funding to support projects to improve community safety and ecosystem health across the Collaborative's lands. Funded projects for the Preserve include shaded fuel breaks and targeted forest thinning, and a series of prescribed burns are being planned in coordination with Cal Fire.

The Preserve has the potential to further expand the network of recreational lands across this section of the Mayacamas Mountains. The Sonoma Land Trust holds a trail easement across the one property that can connect the Preserve to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. When trails are constructed across this easement and on the Preserve, hikers will be able to hike from the Preserve through Sugarloaf Ridge State Park to Hood Mountain Regional Park.

¹ <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2006/1182/pdf/ofr2006-1182.pdf>

2018 Aerial
Imagery Unavailable

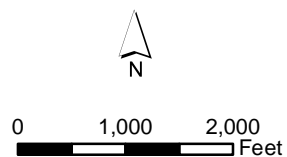


Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve Fee Land Site Map



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SONOMA COUNTY

Map Date: 1/9/2020
Sources: Pictometry International & Sonoma County,
Spring 2018 (aerial); Sonoma County GIS (roads,
parcels); SCWA (streams).
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- Perennial Stream
- - - Intermittent Stream
- Highway
- Property Boundary

Carrington Coast Ranch

Property Facts

- 335 acres
- Located on the Sonoma Coast, north of Bodega Bay
- Date acquired: 5/16/2003
- Acquisition price: \$4,800,000

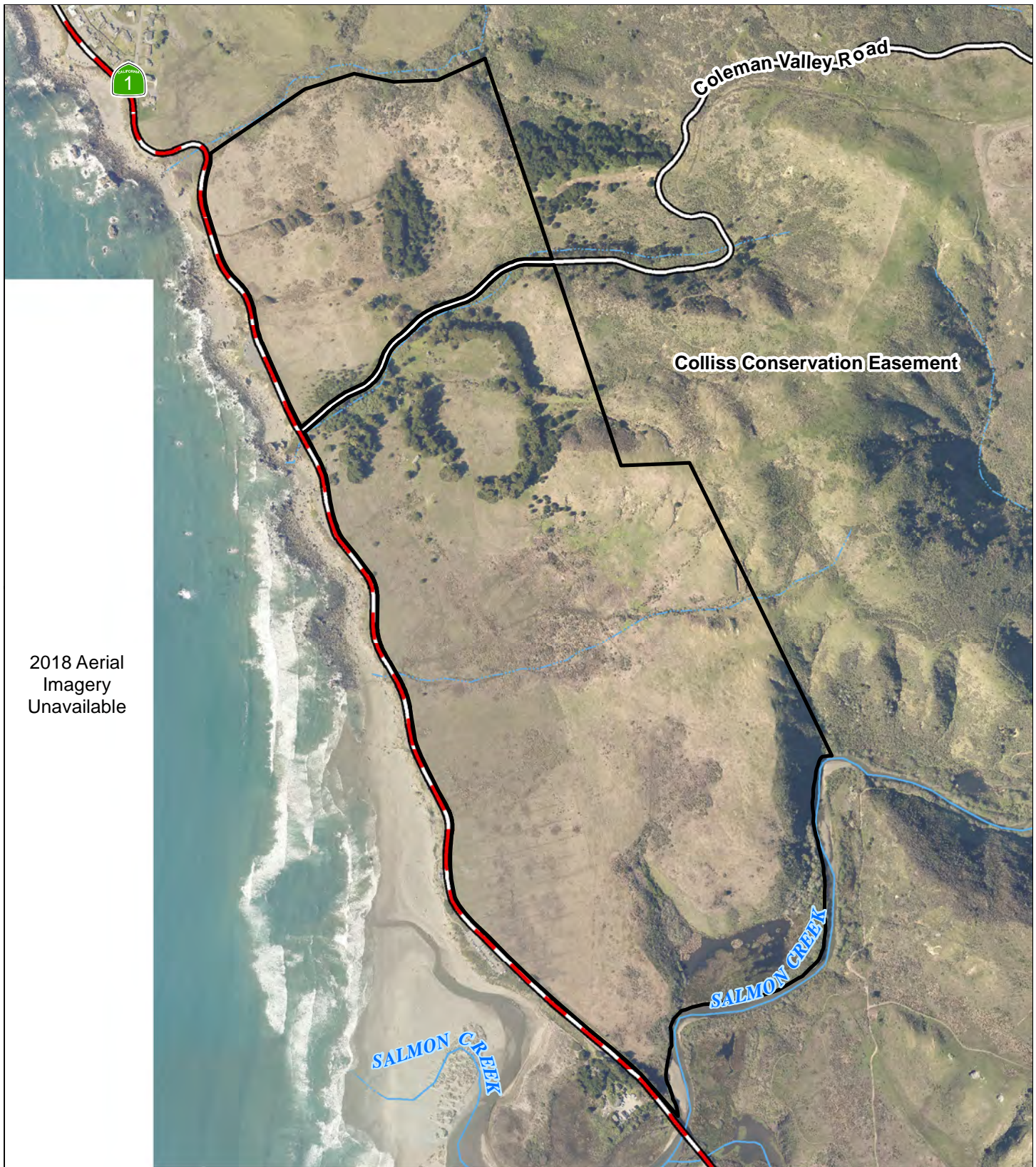
This property was purchased under the Recreation category in Ag + Open Space's Acquisition Plan 2000. Carrington Coast Ranch was acquired with the intention to transfer the land to California State Parks to provide public access and protect the natural resources and features of the property, however, the agency later determined that it was unable to accept ownership of the property. Ag + Open Space is now preparing to transfer the property to Regional Parks by July 1, 2020. The property was dedicated to open space at the time of acquisition.

State Parks prepared an historical landscape evaluation (2006) and an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (2008) for the property. State Parks also donated staff time and resources in helping secure the historic farmhouse.

In May 2014, a wildlife biologist confirmed the presence of a significant maternity roost of Townsend's big-eared bats in the attic of the historic farmhouse. At the time, the species had been proposed as Endangered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and, thus, received the same protections as a fully-listed species. To ensure that the attic remained a safe and stable habitat for the bats, Ag + Open Space contracted with a building stabilization company to stabilize and reinforce the farmhouse in October of 2016. This stabilization project required a humane eviction of the bats prior to beginning work, as well as the execution of a Safe Harbor Agreement with CDFW. In September 2019, Ag + Open Space contracted with a roofing company to repair the roof on the farmhouse. The population of the bats has remained steady since 2016.

Ag + Open Space has established a Volunteer Patrol on the property, comprised of residents from throughout Sonoma County. These trained volunteers hike along the trail that leads to the Salmon Creek overlook, and report observations regarding activities or property condition.

Additionally, Ag + Open Space contracts with local non-profits for outings and workdays on the property. These outings vary from nature hikes along the coastal overlook, to presentations on the history of the ranch. The workdays involve clearing the trail and removing old structures.



2018 Aerial
Imagery
Unavailable

Carrington Coast Ranch Fee Land Site Map



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0 500 1,000
Feet



- Perennial Stream
- - - Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Highway
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary

Dogbane Preserve

Property Facts

- 3.3 acres
- Located in northern Santa Rosa
- Date acquired: 12/9/1997
- Acquisition price: Fee title donation

Dogbane Preserve was accepted under the Greenbelt category in Ag + Open Space's Acquisition Plan, and was protected for the preservation of dogbane and the periodic harvesting of dogbane on the property. The property was not dedicated to open space at the time of acquisition.

Dogbane is an important cultural resource for the Native American communities in this region. This area is a small remnant of what was once a widespread population of dogbane. For centuries, Native Americans have come from all over the state to harvest the plant for use in making cordage, nets, bags, and belts. Occasionally, they would use the cordage in baskets. Ag + Open Space has established an annual harvest and stewardship day, which includes cordage-making demonstrations and removal of blackberries. These harvest days offer an opportunity for the native community to educate the general public about the cultural significance of the dogbane plant, and gives people the chance to participate in stewarding the property, including helping with removal of the highly invasive Himalayan blackberry.

Additionally, Ag + Open Space contracts for maintenance and vegetation management on this property. Vegetation management includes annual weed whipping of the perimeter (no widespread mowing in order to protect the dogbane) and annual targeted mowing of the blackberry. These stewardship activities have made a big impact on portions of the property, and the dogbane population has recovered and is now quite robust. Annual and regular vegetation management is necessary to ensure its continued recovery. The property burned in the 2017 Tubbs Fire, and the fire appears to have stimulated an expansion of the dogbane population while allowing Ag + Open Space staff and volunteers the opportunity to remove resprouting invasive plants.



Dogbane Preserve Fee Land Site Map



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0 100 200
Feet



- Highway
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary

East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail

Property Facts

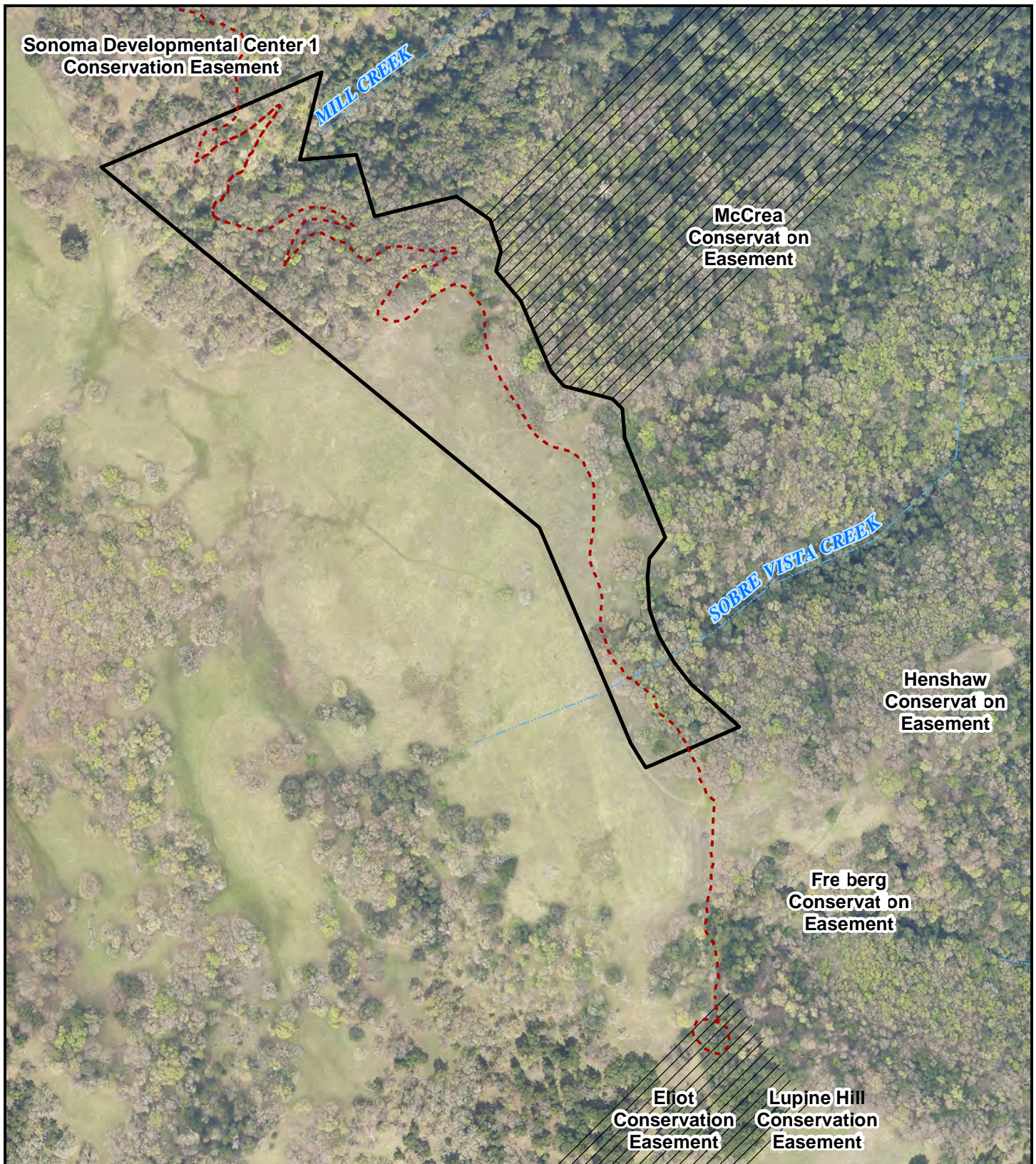
- 22.02 acres, 1.3 miles of trail
- Located on the east slope of Sonoma Mountain
- Property and trail easements acquired through purchase, settlement agreement, and donation over several years

Ag + Open Space worked with various project partners and private landowners to create a 1.3 mile trail for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians that connects to the existing Bay Area Ridge Trail segments in Jack London State Historic Park, the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail, and other publicly held lands.

The trail alignment crosses three private properties (with trail easements held by Ag + Open Space) and one Ag + Open Space-owned property. Elevations range from 1920 to 2180 feet, and on-site and nearby vegetation communities include oak woodland, mixed evergreen forest, redwood forest, bay forest, seasonal wetlands, annual and perennial grasslands.

The project was an example of an innovative planning process involving many project stakeholders, and a plan for project implementation and long-term operation and maintenance primarily through an engaged volunteer community with professional oversight.

Ag + Open Space received a \$55,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy towards project planning. Jack London Park Partners manages the trail as part of its management of Jack London State Park.



East Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail Parcel

Fee Land Site Map



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0 300 600
Feet



- East Slope Trail
- Intermittent Stream
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary

Haroutunian North

Property Facts

- 18 acres
- Located in northern Santa Rosa
- Date acquired: 2/27/1998
- Acquisition price: \$395,000

This property was purchased under the Greenbelt/ Agricultural category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan, and was acquired to maintain the open space character and continue agricultural uses of the area. The property was not dedicated to open space at the time of acquisition.

Since March of 2002, Tierra Vegetables has leased this property for farming. Tierra Vegetables has become a popular farm stand/Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the area.

Additionally, Tierra Vegetables hosts numerous school outings, pumpkin carving contests, and a variety of family-friendly farm gatherings.

Improvements and studies of the property include completion of a boundary survey, various work on the agricultural well, and installation of a hedgerow along the neighboring properties.

In 2011, the Highway 101 widening project required CalTrans to utilize approximately 2 acres of the property to construct a northbound on-ramp to Highway 101. This required the removal of the existing well serving the farm; as such, a new well was drilled and installed outside of the Caltrans area in June-July 2012. The old well has been abandoned to County standards. Ag + Open Space negotiated with CalTrans to pay for these costs as part of the parties' final settlement.



Haroutunian North Fee Land Site Map



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0 150 300
Feet

== Road

== Highway

□ Property Boundary

Haroutunian South

Property Facts

- 21 acres
- Located south of Santa Rosa
- Date acquired: 5/27/1995
- Acquisition price: \$169,200

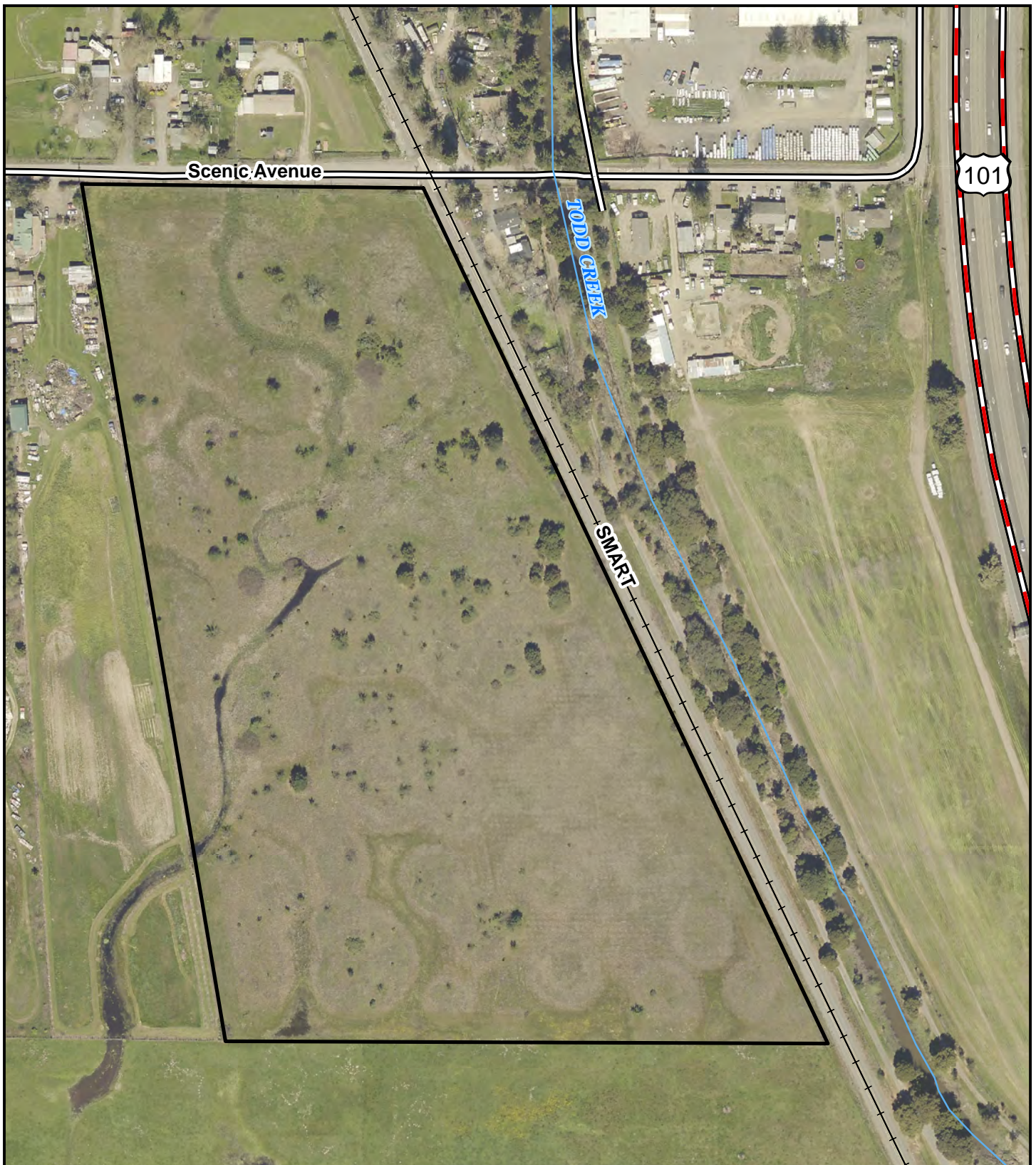
Haroutunian South was purchased under the Greenbelt category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan, and was acquired for the protection of the greenbelt and endangered/rare plants. The property was not dedicated to open space at the time of acquisition. The site includes grassy swales, natural vernal pools, native upland grassland species, live oak tree clusters, coyote brush, and remnants of a prune plum orchard.

The property supports a large population of endangered plant species such as *Blennosperma bakeri* (Sonoma sunshine) and smaller colonies of *Limnanthes vinculans* (Sebastopol meadowfoam). *Linderiella occidentalis* (California Linderiella/fairy shrimp) has also been found on the property. These sensitive species all thrive under natural conditions in wetlands. There is also evidence that California Tiger Salamander (CTS), an endangered state and federally-protected amphibian that depends on vernal pools for reproduction, is present on the property.

Ag + Open Space has contracted with consultants to conduct numerous studies and surveys on the property since acquisition. These studies and surveys include botanical studies, a wetland assessment, and grazing assessments. Scientific research is conducted periodically, mostly by the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, or graduate students, to monitor the populations of these plant and animal species as well as the vernal pools. The property is one of several in the Santa Rosa Plain included in the Laguna Foundation's Adopt a Vernal Pool endangered plant population study.

Invasive plants present on the property include Harding grass and teasel, among others. Ag + Open Space contracts for maintenance and vegetation management, including addressing trespass and fire suppression, on this property. Vegetation management includes annual mowing around the perimeter of the property.

Ag + Open Space has worked with a Certified Rangeland Manager to assess the property's vegetation, and determine the adequate stocking rate and appropriate type of livestock to graze the property. Beginning in May of 2020, a local cattle grazer will seasonally graze a small herd of cattle on the property to reduce fuels, improve vernal pool habitat quality, and benefit the native plant populations by removing the thick, invasive non-native plants that threaten and impede their growth. Once grazing is established, there will be no need for annual mowing along the roads or property perimeter.



Haroutunian South Fee Land Site Map



Map Date: 1/9/2020
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0 150 300 Feet

- Perennial Stream
- Road
- Railroad
- Highway
- Property Boundary

Ho

Property Facts

- 30 acres
- Located east of Rohnert Park
- Date acquired: 5/4/2001
- Acquisition price: \$560,000

The Ho Property was purchased under the Greenbelt category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan and was intended to allow agricultural use of the property and to maintain the open space character. This property was dedicated to open space at the time of the acquisition. In 2001, a wetland assessment study was completed on the property, and it was determined the western third of the property, approximately 10 acres, is a potential wetland area. Ag + Open Space has contracted with a service provider to fence the perimeter of the property and fence off the section of the property with wetlands. Ag + Open Space has a license agreement with a neighbor to graze the property year-round, with seasonal limitations within the wetland area.

Invasive plants present on the property include teasel, Harding grass, velvet grass, and thistle species. Because the property is grazed year round, there is no need for annual mowing around the property perimeter.

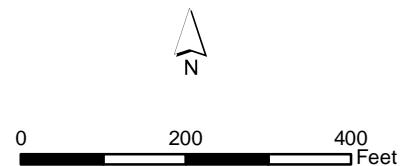


Ho Fee Land Site Map



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SONOMA COUNTY

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- - - - - Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary


Keegan-Coppin

Property Facts

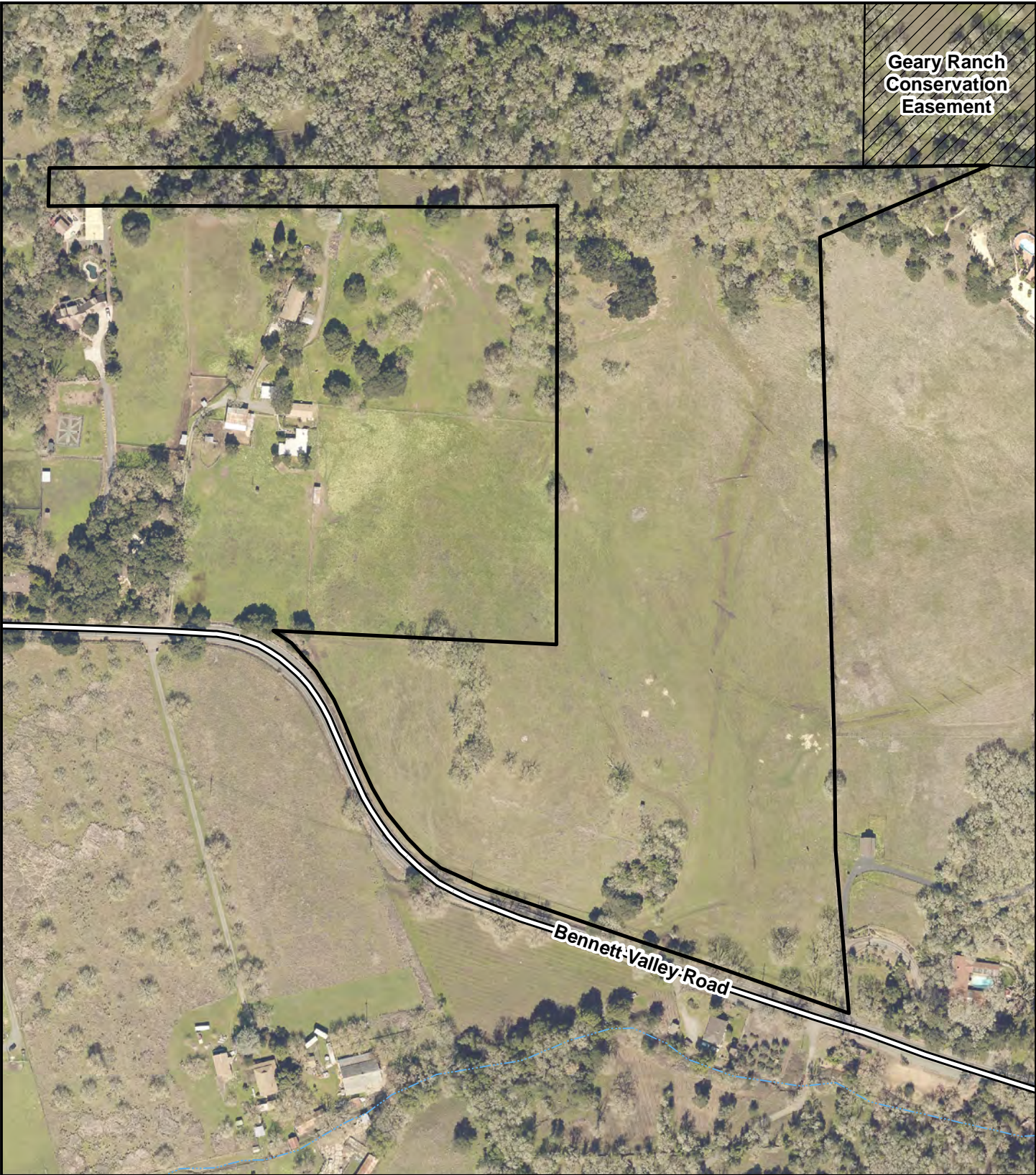
- 24 acres
- Located in Bennett Valley, southeast of Santa Rosa
- Date acquired: 12/11/1997
- Acquisition price: \$550,000

Keegan-Coppin was purchased under the Greenbelt category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan and was intended to allow agricultural use of the property and to maintain the open space character. This property was not dedicated to open space at the time of the acquisition. Trione-Annadel State Park is adjacent to this property.

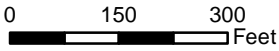
Ag + Open Space has worked with a Certified Rangeland Manager to assess the property's vegetation, and determine the adequate stocking rate and appropriate type of livestock to graze the property. Two horses and a bull graze the 24-acre property year round.

The property consists of grassland with a narrow band of oak woodland at the northern edge and several clusters of oaks, buckeyes, and other woody species in the southern part of the property. The southern half of the site is level to gently sloping and includes a swale that is saturated during the rainy season. Invasive plants present on the property include purple star thistle and gland weed. Ag + Open Space has been working with a consultant to treat the invasive purple star thistle on portions of the property. Because the property is grazed year round, there is no need for annual mowing around the property perimeter. However, maintenance tasks such as fencing repair are occasionally needed. 

Ag + Open Space contracted with a service provider to improve and, in some areas, replace the property's boundary fence in September of 2019.



Keegan-Coppin Fee Land Site Map



- Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary



Map Date: 1/9/2020
Sources: Pictometry International & Sonoma County, Spring 2018 (aerial); Sonoma County GIS (roads, parcels); SCWA (streams).
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Occidental Road Wetlands

Property Facts

- 15 acres
- Located west of Santa Rosa
- Date acquired: 11/10/2008
- Acquisition price: Accepted fee title from County of Sonoma

This property was accepted in fee title under the Recreation category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan. The acquisition was intended to promote restoration and public access in the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The property was not dedicated to open space at the time of acceptance of fee title.

The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation completed restoration work on the property, as part of their work on the Middle Reach of the Laguna. This work was funded by a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy. Additionally, Ag + Open Space contracts for security patrols of the property and trash and debris removal.



Occidental Road Wetlands

Fee Land Site Map



**AG +
OPEN
SPACE**
SONOMA COUNTY

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0 150 300 Feet



- Perennial Stream
- - - Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary

Oken

Property Facts

- 76 acres
- Located north of Rohnert Park
- Date acquired: 4/13/1998
- Acquisition price: \$890,000

This property was purchased under the Greenbelt category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan. The acquisition was intended to allow agricultural use of the area and to maintain the property's open space character. This property was not dedicated to open space at the time of the acquisition. Oken is currently grazed through a grazing lease with the Crane family. Wetlands and remnant riparian areas are present on the property, and the property is within the potential habitat range of the state and federally-protected California Tiger Salamander.

Since the purchase of the Oken property in 1998, Ag + Open Space has undertaken a number of studies, including a Wetland Assessment in June of 2001, a Botanical Assessment and Survey in July 2001, a survey of Ecological Restoration Services in 2002, a survey of Wetland Mitigation Opportunities in August 2002, and a cultural resource survey and wetland delineation in 2019.

Ag + Open Space contracts for vegetation management on this property. Vegetation management includes annual mowing along the Petaluma Hill Road frontage, some mowing along property perimeters and drainages, and invasive thistle management. Mowing occurs after our staff or a qualified consultant conducts a nesting bird survey on the property to ensure no birds or nests are present.

Ag + Open Space is currently implementing a habitat restoration project on the property that will repair headcuts and erosional creek bank areas while reestablishing native riparian vegetation along the property's seasonal drainages. This project is intended to reduce sediment transport off the property and improve native plant and wildlife habitat while allowing for continued commercial agricultural use of the property.



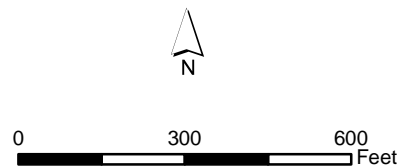
Oken

Fee Land Site Map



**AG +
OPEN
SPACE**
SONOMA COUNTY

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- · — · — · — · — · — · — · — · — Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Property Boundary

Paulin Creek Preserve

Property Facts

- 9 acres
- Located in Santa Rosa
- Date acquired: 7/31/2002
- Acquisition price: \$1,575,000

This property was purchased under the Recreation category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan, and was intended to preserve the existing natural conditions and provide public outdoor recreation. This property was dedicated to open space at the time of the acquisition.

Adjacent to the 9 acres owned by Ag + Open Space are 10 acres owned by the County of Sonoma and 27 acres owned by the Sonoma Water. The 46-acres together includes riparian woodland areas, a flood retention pond, oak woodlands and grasslands. Since this property lies within the City of Santa Rosa limits, the intention at the time of acquisition was that this property would be operated as a nature preserve and public park by the City of Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department. At this time there is not an identified recipient for fee title transfer of this property.

Ag + Open Space has established a Volunteer Patrol on the property, comprised primarily of neighbors. Trained volunteers patrol the trail that winds through all three properties, and report any activity or property condition they have concerns or questions about. Additionally, Ag + Open Space provides outings and workdays on the property. These outings vary from nature hikes to bird watching. The workdays involve clearing the trail and removing invasive plants.

In 2003 Ag + Open Space developed a baseline documentation report for the property. This report documents the property conditions, natural features, and current uses and improvements at that time. Ag + Open Space completed a Draft Management Plan for the 46 acres in 2006.

Ag + Open Space contracts for maintenance and vegetation management, including removal of debris, managing invasive plant species, and annual fire abatement mowing. Mowing occurs after consultants conduct a nesting bird survey on the property to ensure no birds or nests are present. Ag + Open Space has actively been treating the Preserve's most impactful and invasive species, French broom, English ivy, and Himalayan blackberry. Invasive species management services are provided by volunteers and through contract.

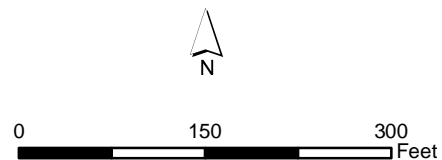





Paulin Creek Preserve

Fee Land Site Map



Map Date: 1/9/2020
Sources: Pictometry International & Sonoma County, Spring 2018 (aerial); Sonoma County GIS (roads, parcels); SCWA (streams).
This map displays GIS data for illustrative purposes only and is not intended to depict definitive property boundaries or feature locations.



-  Intermittent Stream
-  Road
-  Property Boundary

Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve

Property Facts

- 960 acres
- Located northeast of Santa Rosa, in the Mark West Creek watershed
- Date acquired: 1/13/2006
- Acquisition price: \$9,700,000; Ag + Open Space contribution \$8,700,000

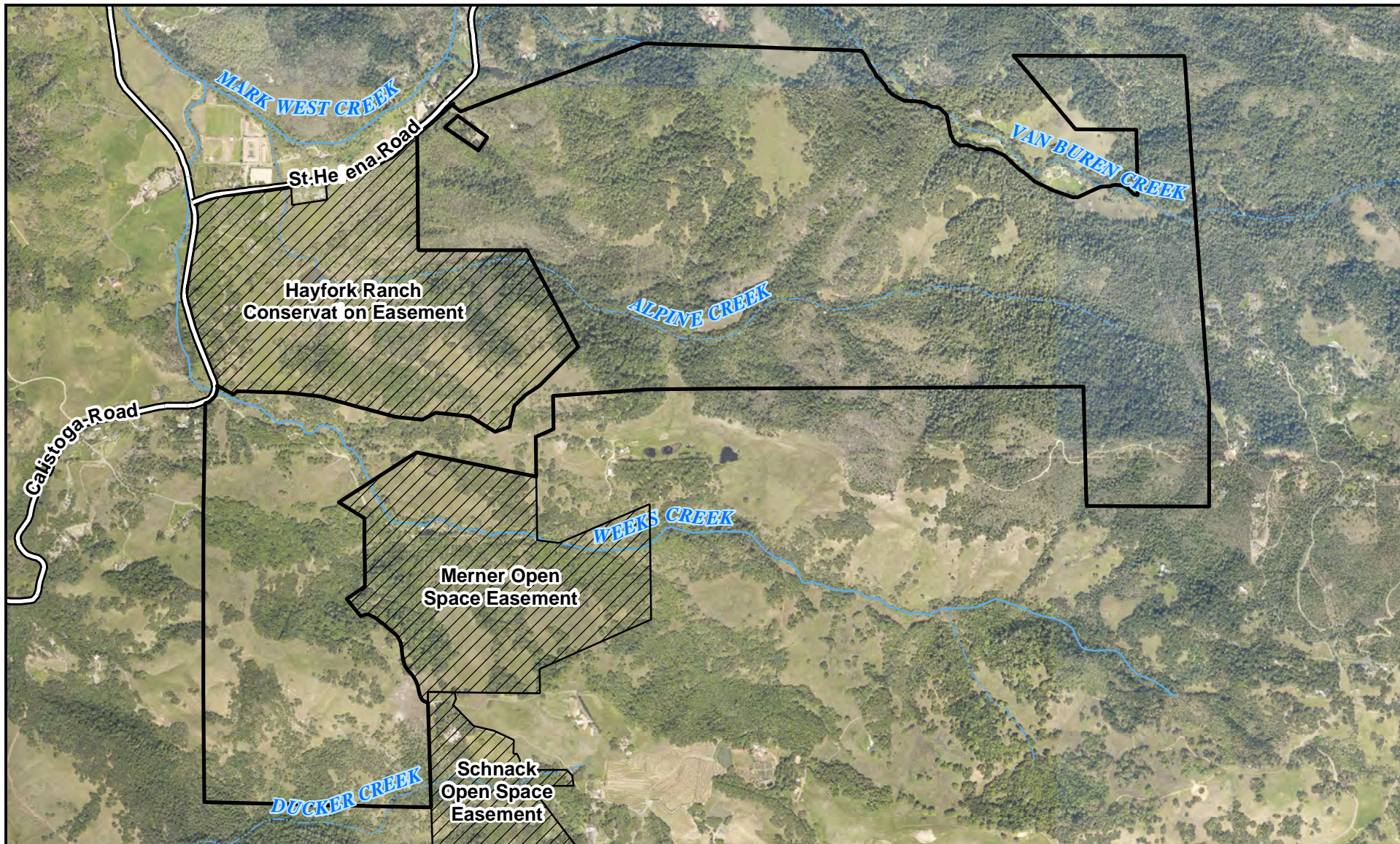
Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve (Preserve) was purchased under the Natural Resources category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan. The acquisition was intended to protect the natural resources on the Preserve, as well as contribute to the protection of key properties within the Mark West Creek watershed. The Preserve contains portions of four creeks, including almost all of the Alpine Creek watershed, and provides habitat for eight special-status plant species, including federally endangered Clara Hunt's milk vetch, as well as several special-status wildlife species. Steelhead trout, northern spotted owls, and western pond turtles have been documented on the property. The property was dedicated to open space at the time of acquisition.

Ag + Open Space has an established a Volunteer Patrol program on the Preserve. Trained volunteers patrol the Preserve's roads and trails and provide reports to Ag + Open Space on property conditions, invasive species, wildlife sightings, signs of trespass or unauthorized use, and maintenance needs such as downed trees across roadways or new signs of erosion. Volunteer Patrollers provide a valuable monitoring presence on the Preserve in addition to regular visits from our staff and consultants. Additionally, Ag + Open Space provides public outings on the Preserve. These outings typically highlight educational topics such as native flora and fauna, rare plants, local fire ecology, and aquatic ecology as well as Ag + Open Space's role in protecting Sonoma County's natural lands.

A \$1,000,000 grant was received from the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) towards the acquisition of this property. One requirement of the SCC grant was the development of a Management Plan for the Preserve to assess and document its natural and cultural resources and the condition of its existing road network, develop recommendations for natural resource protection and enhancement, and inform appropriate public access. The management plan and associated Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration were completed and were adopted by the Board of Directors in October 2019. The management plan provides a comprehensive assessment of the Preserve's resources and recommends prioritization of several key land management and habitat improvement project types, including fuel management, invasive species management, erosion prevention, and enhancement of several sensitive habitat types.

Overcrowding in the Preserve's forests, encroachment of Douglas fir into oak woodland and rare chaparral communities, and loss of the Preserve's native grasslands to aggressive invasive species are key concerns. Ag + Open Space is currently working with Cal Fire to plan and implement a series of fuel treatments, including shaded fuel breaks, targeted forest thinning, and prescribed burning that will reduce hazardous fuels on the property; ensure safe access for emergency personnel; improve forest health, stand structure, and carbon sequestration potential; encourage germination of fire-dependent native species; reduce invasive species and pathogens; and improve grazing forage on the property while buffering northeastern Santa Rosa from future wildfires. Ag + Open Space is also working with California Fish & Wildlife and Sonoma State University to implement research projects intended to improve habitat for sensitive species and to quantify changes in forest stand structure and fuel loading before and after fuel treatments. Invasive species monitoring, mapping, and control is handled through contracts with qualified consultants and the long-term goal is to manage invasive species primarily through prescribed burning, targeted rotational grazing, and hand-pulling with minimal use of herbicides.

Ag + Open Space hopes to work with local tribes to develop a vision for long-term forest management and prescribed fire use on the Preserve that would incorporate indigenous knowledge and the best available science to improve and protect the health and resiliency of the Preserve's ecosystems while enabling tribal and community access and engagement.



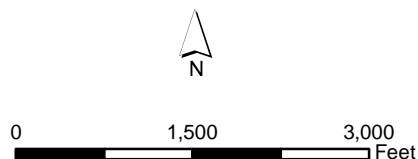
Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve

Fee Land Site Map



**AG +
OPEN
SPACE**
SONOMA COUNTY

Map Date: 1/9/2020
Sources: Pictometry International & Sonoma County, Spring 2018 (aerial); Sonoma County GIS (roads, parcels); SCWA (streams).
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- Perennial Stream
- - - Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary

San Francisco Archdiocese

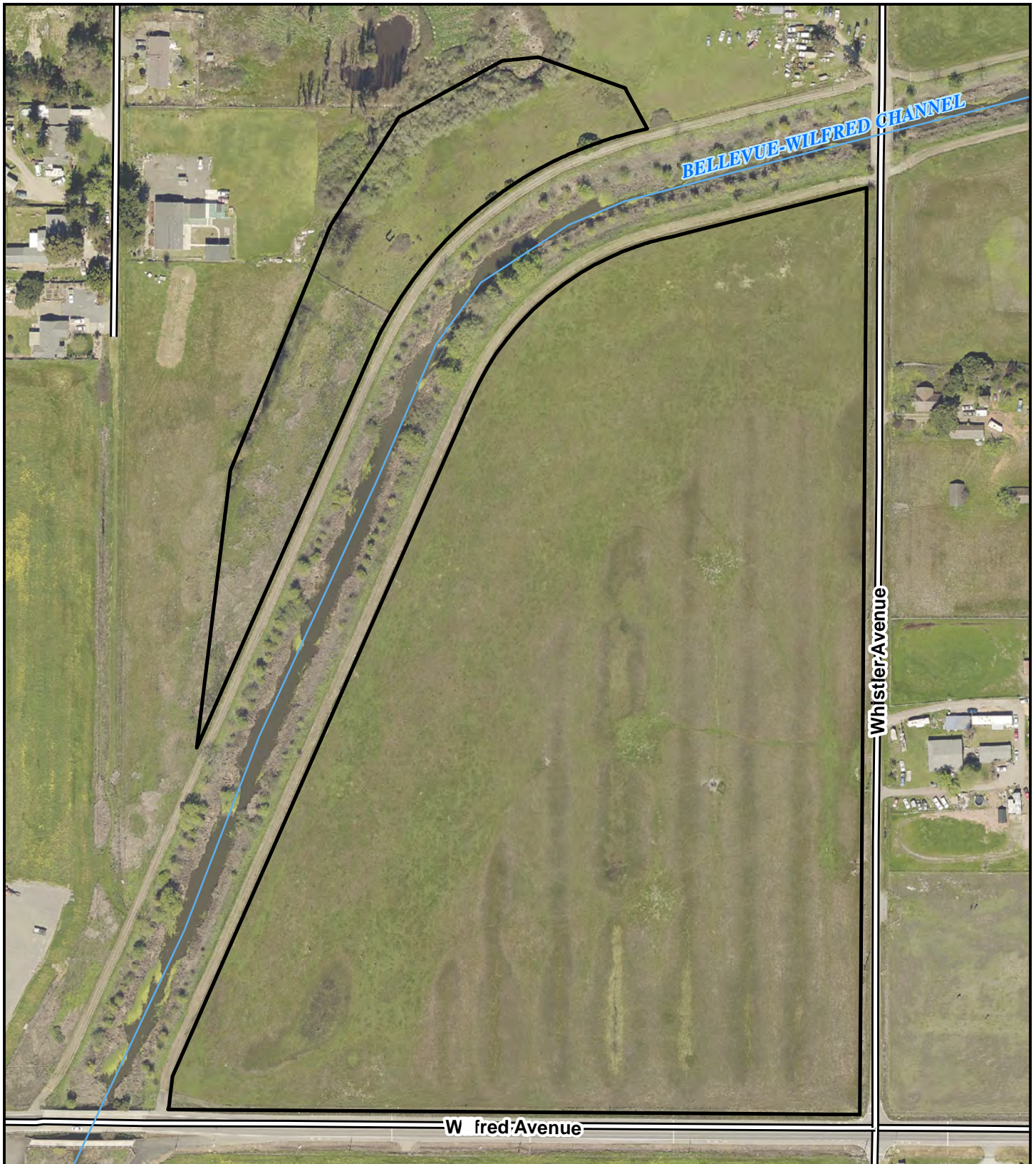
Property Facts

- 28 acres
- Located west of Rohnert Park
- Date acquired: 9/02/1994
- Acquisition price: \$133,000

This property was purchased under the Greenbelt category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan. The acquisition was intended to maintain agricultural uses of the area, provide protection of the wetlands and allow potential restoration of the land to limited agricultural uses. This property was not dedicated to open space at the time of the acquisition.

The property consists of open grassland with a cluster of riparian woodland at the northern extremity of the site and seasonal wetlands in the southern portion of property. Ag + Open Space worked with a certified rangeland manager to assess the property's vegetation and determine the adequate stocking rate, and appropriate type of livestock to graze the property. Three cows graze the property's eastern parcel and thirteen sheep graze the western parcel.

Because the property is grazed year round, there is no need for annual mowing around the property perimeter. However, Ag + Open Space performs occasional maintenance tasks, such as debris and trash removal. Ag + Open Space contracted with a service provider to improve and, in some areas, replace the property boundary fence in September 2019.



San Francisco Archdiocese

Fee Land Site Map



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0 150 300 Feet

- Perennial Stream
- Road
- Property Boundary

Wright Hill Ranch

Property Facts

- 1236 acres
- Located near the Sonoma Coast, south of Jenner
- Date acquired: 9/28/2007
- Acquisition price: \$5,600,000 Ag + Open Space's contribution: \$4,850,000

This property was acquired under the Recreation and Education categories in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan and was intended to protect the scenic woodlands, meadows and critical habitats on the property, as well as allow appropriate low-intensity public outdoor recreation. The property was dedicated to open space at the time of acquisition.

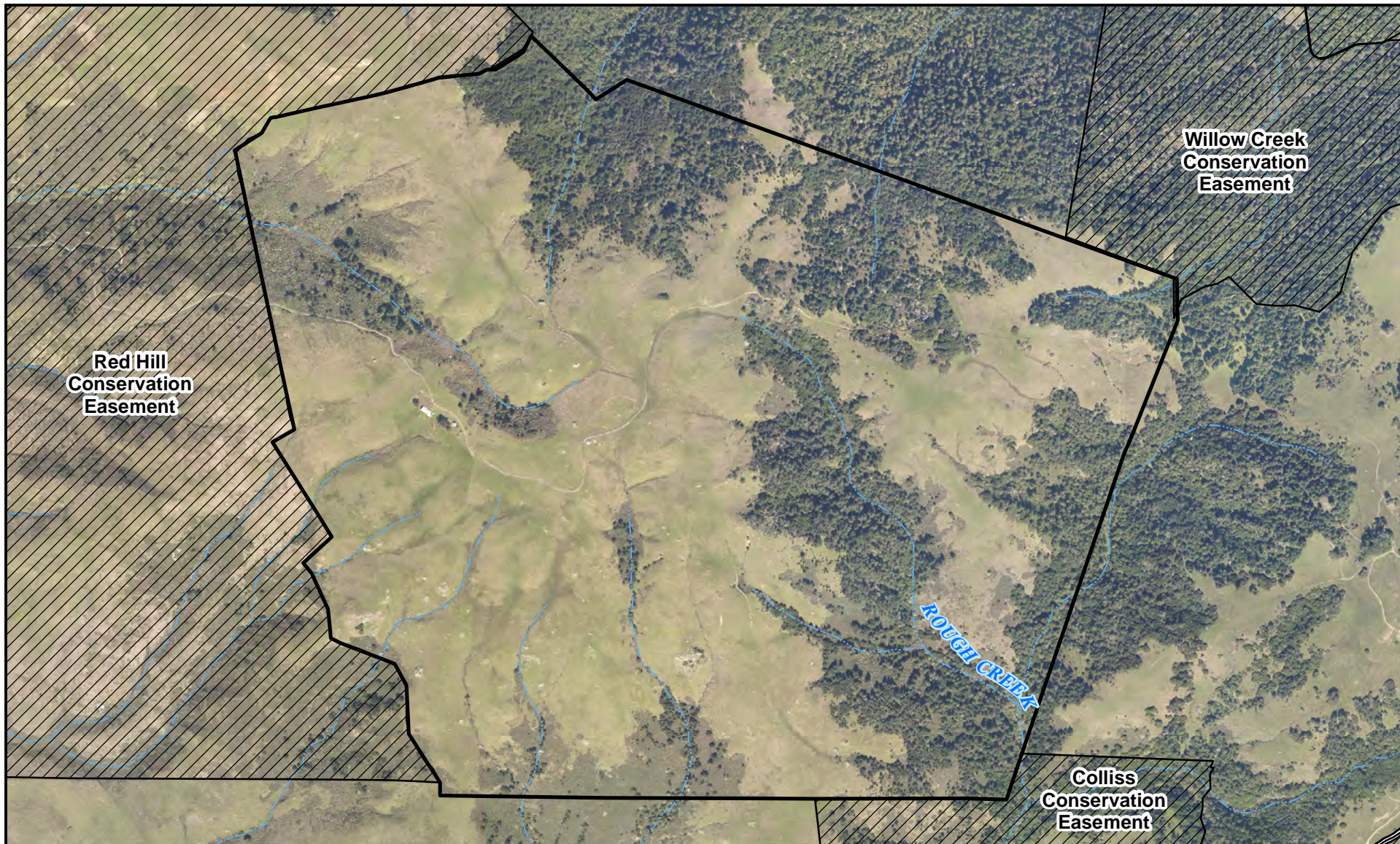
Ag + Open Space has established a Volunteer Patrol on the property. Trained volunteers patrol the roads and trails on the property, and report any observations of activities or property condition. Additionally, Ag + Open Space contracts with local non-profits for guided outings on the property. These outings vary from hikes to viewpoints of the Sonoma Coast, to bird walks, to presentations on the history of the property.

A grant for \$750,000 was received from the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) towards the acquisition of this property. One requirement of the SCC grant was the development of a Management Plan for the property that would assess and document existing conditions on the property, and develop recommendations for natural resource protection and enhancement, as well as any appropriate public access. In 2008, Ag + Open Space entered into a contract for the development of the Management Plan. The plan assessed and documented the existing conditions on the property, and included recommendations for natural resource and cultural resource protection, and appropriate levels of public access. The Ag + Open Space Board of Directors approved the Management Plan in 2017.

The Wright Hill Ranch property includes a house and barn and small workshop. The house was built in the 1880s and is listed as a significant historic building in the region. The property is leased for year-round grazing.

Invasive plants present on the property include Italian thistle, bull thistle, jubata grass, and Himalayan blackberry, among others. Because the property is grazed year round, there is no need for annual mowing along the roads or around the perimeter of the property. However, occasional maintenance tasks are performed, such as fencing and other infrastructure repair, house and barn repair, and road maintenance. Ag + Open Space contracts for necessary maintenance on this property.

As part of the purchase agreement, Ag + Open Space was required to remediate an old sheep dip located behind the barn on the property. This included excavating a significant amount of contaminated soil, which was hauled offsite for proper disposal.

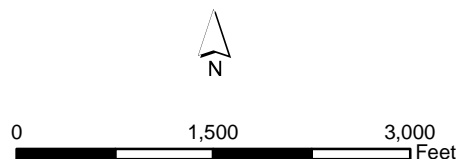


Wright Hill Ranch Fee Land Site Map



**AG +
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SPACE**
SONOMA COUNTY

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- - - - - Intermittent Stream
- Other Ag + Open Space Holding
- Property Boundary

Young-Armos

Property Facts

- 45 acres
- Located near Rohnert Park
- Date acquired: 5/19/1997
- Acquisition price: \$370,000

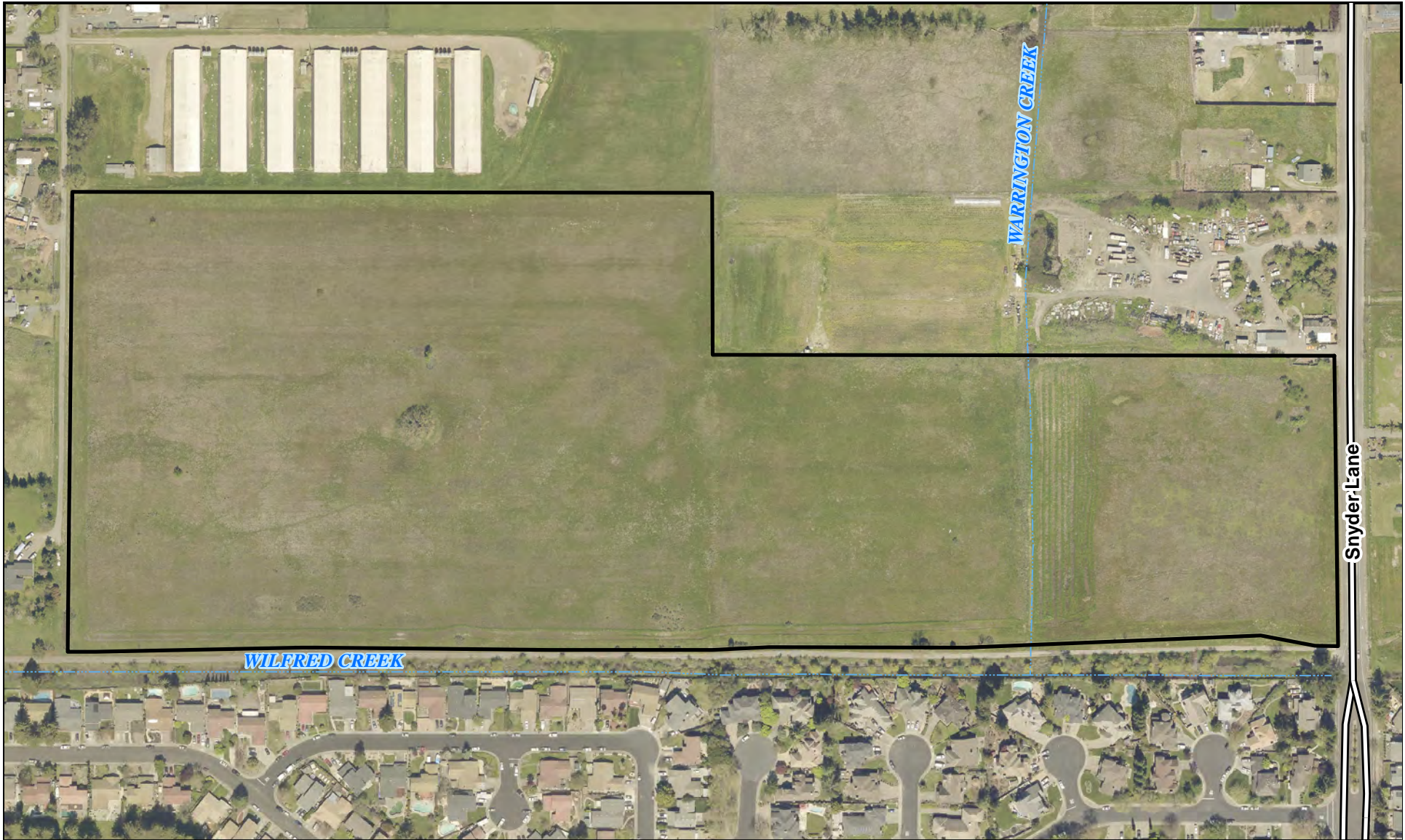
This property was purchased under the Greenbelt category in the Ag + Open Space Acquisition Plan. The acquisition was intended to allow continued agricultural use of the area and maintain the preserve the natural conditions. This property was not dedicated to open space at the time of the acquisition.

Ag + Open Space has worked with a Certified Rangeland Manager to assess the property's vegetation and determine the adequate livestock stocking rate and appropriate type of livestock to graze the property.

In 2001, a Wetland Assessment study and a botanical assessment and survey were completed on the property. Young-Armos has several wetland areas near the middle of the property where a single oak tree resides. The property also consists of annual grassland and a few coyote brush shrubs. This property is within the potential habitat range of the state and federally-protected California Tiger Salamander.

Ag + Open Space contracts for maintenance and vegetation management, including removal of debris, fence repair, and annual mowing around the property perimeter. Mowing occurs after a consultant conducts a nesting bird survey on the property to ensure no birds or nests are present. If nesting birds are present, mowing is postponed until the birds fledge and leave the nest.

Ag + Open Space plans to repair the existing well onsite and repair sections of the existing boundary fence to prepare the property for grazing.

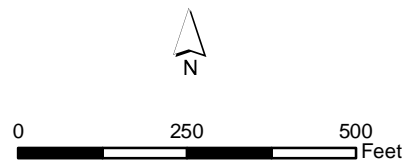


Young-Armos Fee Land Site Map



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- - - - - Intermittent Stream
- Road
- Property Boundary