



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Online Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order

June 24, 2021 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PLEASE CALL IF UNABLE TO ATTEND

In accordance with Executive Order N-29-20, the June 24, 2021 Advisory Committee meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY NOT ATTEND THIS MEETING IN PERSON

***UPDATE REGARDING VIEWING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
June 24, 2021 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING***

June 24, 2021 Advisory Committee Meeting will be held online through Zoom. There will be no option for attending in person. Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting using one of the following methods:

Join the Zoom meeting on your computer, tablet or smartphone by clicking:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/92279920566?pwd=cCtYUk51Y3lWXXl1cVI0UHg5WnRPQT09>

1. If you have the Zoom app or web client, join the meeting using the Password: 397875
2. Call-in and listen to the meeting: Dial 1 669 900 9128 Enter meeting ID: 922 7992 0566

PUBLIC COMMENT DURING THE MEETING: You may email public comment to Mariah.Robson@sonoma-county.org. All emailed public comments will be forwarded to all Committee Members and read aloud for the benefit of the public. Please include your name and the relevant agenda item number to which your comment refers. In addition, if you have joined as a member of the public through the Zoom link or by calling in, there will be specific points throughout the meeting during which live public comment may be made via Zoom and phone.

DISABLED ACCOMMODATION: If you have a disability which requires an accommodation or an alternative format to assist you in observing and commenting on this meeting, please contact Mariah Robson by email to Mariah.Robson@sonoma-county.org by 12pm Wednesday, June 23, 2021 to ensure arrangements for accommodation.

END OF UPDATE

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comment**
Comments on items not listed on the agenda. Time is limited to 2 minutes per person/item.
3. **Approval of Minutes from May 27, 2021 Attachment A**
4. **General Manager's Report**
5. **Formation of Ag Subcommittee Attachment B**
Misti Arias, General Manager
Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist
6. **Vegetation Management Grant Attachment C**
Caryl Hart, Vegetation Management and Climate Resilience
7. **Projects in Negotiations Attachment D**
8. **Announcements from Advisory Committee Members**
9. **Adjournment**
Next Scheduled Meeting: July 22, 2021





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SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order
May 27, 2021 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michelle Whitman	Bill Smith	Ariel Kelley	Brian Barnacle
Curt Nichols	Neysa Hinton	Paul Martin	
Jan McFarland	Sue Conley	Doug Lipton	
Tawny Tesconi	Don McEnhill	Steve Rabinowitsh	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

John Nagle
Kristina Tierney
Cary Fargo

STAFF PRESENT:

Misti Arias, General Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Interim Acquisition Manager; Amy Ricard, Community Relations Specialist; Stephanie Tavares-Buhler, Senior Acquisition Specialist; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist; Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist; Lisa Pheatt, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Whitman called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Public Comment

Chair Whitman asked for any public comments on items not on the agenda. There were none. However, she had received an email statement from a previous Ag + Open Space General Manager, David Hansen. Chair Whitman read the statement welcoming Mist Arias, the new General Manager, to her position.

Approval of Minutes from March 25, 2021

Chair Whitman asked for any comments or revisions regarding the March 25, 2021 minutes. There were none. Neysa Hinton motioned for the minutes to be approved as is and Ariel Kelley seconded the motion. All were in favor with two abstentions from Steve Rabinowitsh and Jan McFarland who were not in attendance at last month's meeting. There were no public comment on the minutes.

General Manager's Report

- Misti Arias, General Manager, announced some new hires and a promotion within the staff of Ag + Open Space:
 - Curtis Kendall was promoted to Acquisition Specialist from Acquisition Assistant. A recruitment for his Assistant position will begin soon.
 - Marina Davies was hired as a Stewardship Technician on May 18, 2021.
 - Ms. Arias was promoted to permanent General Manager on May 18, 2021.
 - Mary Chambers was hired as the Agricultural Specialist and will be helping with the Ag Subcommittee.
- Awarding contracts for the Oken habitat restoration project, a property on the edge of the Rohnert Park wetlands, and is part of a larger riparian habitat restoration project, will go to the Board on June 8, 2021.
- The Lang Conservation Easement Amendment will go to the Board on July 13, 2021.
- The Vegetation Management funding grants for the Vegetation Management position closed last week with 90 applications. The awards were announced last week.
- By March of this year, our Outings and Education Program has reached over 6,300 participants due to the virtual outings provided during the pandemic. In normal years we reach roughly 4,000. Future outings will include a combination of on-land experiences with virtual options as well.
- Website updates continue with a homepage refresh coming soon. It is in the process of becoming modernized.
- Calabazas and Wright Hill property transfers to Regional Parks were approved by the Board and we will conduct media outreach at time of transfer, most likely in July and August.
- We are still working to secure coverage for the Mattos conservation easement acquisition. The Press Democrat is interested in the story, but the Mattos family would prefer to maintain their privacy, so Amy Ricard, our Community Relations Specialist, is working on looking at different angles that might appeal to the PD while allowing the Mattoses to remain anonymous.
- The Vegetation Management position is going to the Board on June 8, 2021. This position will be funded through the PG&E funds and housed at the Ag + Open Space offices.

Chair Whitman said that the Ag Subcommittee, which Paul Martin had suggested the Advisory Committee reconvene at a prior meeting, will take place next month and will be agendaized. Mary Chambers, the new Agricultural Specialist, spoke about the Ag Subcommittee as a way to help the Vital Lands Initiative be incorporated into the agricultural process and that the subcommittee will provide insights and ways to move forward with the newly approved initiative.

Advisory Committee members welcomed Ms. Arias as the new General Manager, who has been with the Ag + Open Space since 1990.

Advisory Committee members also welcomed Steve Rabinowitsh back as a member. He served on the Advisory Committee since 1991 for all but 10 years. Mr. Rabinowitsh expressed he was pleased to be back.



Mary Chambers was also welcomed as the new Agricultural Specialist.

Members of the public, Susan Kirks, noted that she was pleased to hear the first General Manger Report Out from Ms. Arias as the new General Manager. She also welcomed Mr. Kendall as the new Acquisition Specialist, who also has many years of experience with Ag + Open Space.

Formation of Subcommittees

Ms. Arias introduced and discussed forming an Acquisition Subcommittee to help implement the Vital Lands criteria into the acquisitions process. The subcommittee would meet to discuss and prioritize projects and then report back to the full Advisory Committee. There would be more work and meetings up front but eventually the subcommittee would only meet quarterly or twice a year. This would include field trips as well. Jennifer Kuszmar, Interim Acquisition Manager, explained that the subcommittee would provide input on project evaluation criteria. She asked if there were any volunteers for the subcommittee, with the maximum number of six to avoid a quorum, and the following committee members expressed interest:

Neysa Hinton, Brian Barnacle, Sue Conley, Don McEnhill, Jan McFarland and Tawny Tesconi. Curt Nichols motioned to form the subcommittee with the six members who volunteered. Bill Smith seconded the motion. There were no public comments.

Roll call on the vote was taken: Bill Smith, yes. Steve Rabinowitsh, yes. Curt Nichols, yes. Ariel Kelley, yes. Don McEnhill, yes. Doug Lipton, yes. Jan McFarland, yes. Sue Conley, yes. Brian Barnacle, yes. Neysa Hinton, yes. Tawny Tesconi, yes. Michelle Whitman, yes.

The Acquisition Subcommittee was voted in.

Acquisition Projects Overview

Ms. Kuszmar introduced the Acquisition Projects Overview. The three properties presented were Ayers, Baumert Springs and Miguel-Tocci.

Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist, shared a PowerPoint presentation on Ayers and Baumert Springs. Ayers is adjacent to the Armstrong Redwood State Park on three sides of the property. This project would protect creeks and waterways and add some new public areas to the park. It is a 320 acre property, including 8.2 acres of old growth redwoods, 161 acres of conifer forest and 91 acres of tanoak woodland.

Baumert Springs is located on the Bohemian Highway near Camp Meeker. St. Dorothy's Rest currently uses the property for summer camp programs. This project would protect creeks, waterways and redwoods and provide public recreational and educational opportunities. It is a 372 acre property that includes Baumert Springs, a tributary to Dutch Bill Creek.

Stephanie Tavares-Buhler, Senior Acquisition Specialist, shared a PowerPoint presentation on the Miguel-Tocci Ranch property. This project is in the coastal range along the Bohemian Highway that is adjacent to the Sonoma Land Trust's Quail Hill conservation easement. This project would protect Nolan creek, a mosaic of habitat types, rangeland and grazing land, and parts of it are visible from the Bohemian Highway scenic corridor. It is a 489 acre property that includes 2 building envelopes.

The meeting was opened for discussion with members of the committee and the public.



For more information, the PowerPoint presentations are available upon request, or contact Ms. Morris or Ms. Tavares-Buhler at Ag + Open Space.

Projects in Negotiations

Ms. Kuszmar pointed out that the Pfendler property was put on the active list unintentionally.

Chair Whitman opened up the meeting for member and public comments but there were none.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

Chair Whitman welcomed returning member Steve Rabinowitsh and acknowledged his institutional knowledge and passion.

Doug Lipton announced that Farm to Pantry is hosting a Gala on June 26, 2021 at the Jackson Family Winery. Farm to Pantry help farmers by purchasing their food products and giving them to people in need.

Adjournment

Chair Whitman adjourned the meeting at 6:21.

Next Meeting: June 24, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary



Agriculture Advisory Subcommittee

Draft Charter

Staff support: Agricultural Specialist (Mary Chambers), Interim Acquisitions Manager (Jen Kuszmar), Senior Acquisition Specialist (Steph Tavares-Buhler), General Manager (Misti Arias), and/or others as needed.

Members: TBD (volunteer/selected members of the advisory committee).

Purpose of the Agriculture Advisory Subcommittee (AASC)

To provide collaboration and input on Ag + Open Space's agricultural programs, strategies, and initiatives; and to support productive engagement between Ag + Open Space and the broader agricultural community.

Expected Outcomes

- Increase engagement with the agricultural community by developing structure(s) for outreach, building on the challenges and successes encountered while developing the Vital Lands Initiative.
- Consider how to operationalize the broad goals presented in the Vital Lands Initiative.
- Provide input on Ag + Open Space's agricultural programming and strategies, such as prioritization criteria for agricultural projects.
- Assist with identifying, evaluating, and developing innovative tools and approaches to agricultural land conservation and enhancing existing tools such as conservation easement language.
- Provide input on current and upcoming priority areas for Ag + Open Space's agricultural work, such as climate change prevention and adaptation and equitable land access.
- Identify new and innovative priority areas for Ag + Open Space agricultural programming.
- Help to identify partners for priority areas.
- Other contributions as identified by Ag + Open Space, the Advisory Committee, and the AASC.

Duration and Time Commitment

The AASC will meet approximately monthly for 1-2 hours depending on agenda topics to cover. More frequent meetings may be necessary to complete priority projects. Ag + Open Space staff will develop and maintain an agenda six months out. AASC members will evaluate the frequency of the meetings six months after initiation and make refinements as necessary.

Scope of Work

The AASC will develop 6-month and 12-month lists of priority focus areas from which detailed goals, outcomes, and agendas will be developed by Ag + Open Space staff.

Roles + responsibilities

Ag + Open Space Staff

- Propose and implement refinements to the subcommittee charter.
- Prepare for and convene meetings including scheduling, setting the agenda, facilitating the meeting, and taking notes.
- Provide materials and/or request contributions in advance when appropriate to allow for thoughtful review.
- Share subcommittee discussions, questions, recommendations, and meeting outcomes with the Advisory Committee and with Ag + Open Space management and staff.

AASC members

- Attend regular meetings.
- Review materials, products, strategies, etc.
- Identify issues, opportunities, and potential solutions.
- Openly share insights, thoughts, and opinions with the AASC on their own behalf and on behalf of the organizations, groups, and/or communities they represent.
- Serve as liaisons to relevant external groups.

ATTACHMENT "C"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of Supervisors Approves Over \$3.7 Million for Vegetation Management Projects to Reduce Wildfire Risk

Funding will support countywide projects to clear roads, create defensible space, increase safety

Santa Rosa, CA – June 2, 2021 – The Board of Supervisors has approved \$3,722,160 in grant funding for 20 vegetation management projects throughout Sonoma County to help reduce fire risk in the 2021 and 2022 wildfire seasons. In addition, another seven projects in the Russian River area have been conditionally approved for future funding pending the completion of outstanding project design and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) work. The funds are derived from the PG&E settlement awarded to the County as a result of the 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires lawsuit. In 2020, the Board of Supervisors voted to allocate \$25 million of the \$149 million settlement toward vegetation management activities.

"We are pleased to be able to support our local fire districts, homeowners' associations, non-profit partners, and community groups in making our county safer and more resilient in the face of what is anticipated to be a severe wildfire season," said Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Lynda Hopkins. "Through this grant program we are able to help landowners and communities clear critical access roads, create defensible space around structures, form much-needed shaded fuel breaks, and educate the community on wildfire safety and risk reduction. In addition, we are looking forward to working closely with river communities on resolving project design and CEQA issues so that these projects can also be approved for funding this summer.

The Board of Supervisors originally set aside \$2-4 million from the PG&E settlement funds to complete "shovel-ready" projects that would result in the greatest fire-risk reduction going into the 2021 and 2022 wildfire seasons.

County staff received 89 applications totaling more than \$16 million in requested funds. After careful review of the applications by a selection committee made up of representatives from the County Administrator's Office, the County's natural resource agencies and CalFire (Ag + Open Space, Regional Parks, Permit Sonoma, Sonoma Water, and UC Cooperative Extension), the Board agreed to accept 20 projects totaling over \$3.7 million into the program. The grant funds do not require match funding from the applicants and will be disbursed upon execution of a grant agreement with the County so that projects can get underway as soon as possible. In addition, County staff will work to resolve outstanding project

design and CEQA issues for the seven Russian River area projects to allow them to return to the Board for funding this summer.

“Given that this is the first grant program of this nature administered by the County, we were not sure how many applications we would receive,” said Caryl Hart, former interim General Manager of Ag + Open Space and county lead for the vegetation management program. “The sheer amount and quality of the applications we received is a clear indicator of the need and desire of the community to reduce fire risk across the county; and we look forward to working with those applicants that were not awarded funds during this cycle to address vegetation management concerns through other funding and technical assistance channels, and to encourage them to apply for the next round of County funding.”

See below for a list of all the approved projects and funding amounts (in alphabetical order):

Project	Approved Funding Request
Alert Sonoma County	\$122,000
Cavedale – Trinity	\$250,000
Coast Ridge	\$423,000
Fire Safe Sonoma WFAP	\$37,100
Foothills POA	\$20,904
Good Fire Revival	\$145,000
Gualala Ranch HOA	\$77,000
Jenner Headlands Preserve	\$165,000
Kashia Band of Pomo Indians	\$120,936
Landsmart Community Grazing	\$184,600
Mill Creek Post Fire Shaded Fuel Breaks	\$300,000
Moonraker Firetower Perimeter	\$26,460
North Bay Forest Improvement Program	\$163,381
Northern Sonoma County JPA	\$504,700
Resilient Landscapes Coalition	\$110,317
Sonoma Valley Fire District	\$93,379
Sweetwater – Mt. Jackson	\$227,050
Timber Cove Community Chipping Project	\$129,012

Upper Mark West	\$515,861
Wilshire Crystal Heights	\$106,460
Total	\$3,722,160

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Contact Information

Paul Gullixson

Communications Manager

County Administrator's Office

County of Sonoma

Matching Grant Project	Acreage (approximate)	Supervisory District	Location	Begin Grant Process	Appraisal Process	Approvals/Baseline	Escrow	Comments
A Place to Play	87	5	Western Santa Rosa					Initiating project
AmeriCorps Trail	12	5	Sebastopol		n/a			Initiating project
Andy's Unity Park	4	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x				Escrow closed in 2017. Tracking match
Badger Park	20	4	Healdsburg					Initiating project
Bayer Farm Development***	6**	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	x	x	x	Reimbursement ongoing, Grant term extended
Bodega Bay Trail	179	5	Bodega Bay					Initiating project
Colgan Creek Phase 3 MG***	7	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a	x	x	Extension granted to 10/14/21
Crane Creek Regional Trail*	6	1	East of Rohnert Park	x	n/a			Drafting documents. Grant extended to 12/6/21
Denman Reach	2	2	North Petaluma	x	n/a			Drafting documents
Falletti Ranch	4	2	Cotati	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Forever Forestville***	4	5	Downtown Forestville	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Graton Green	1	5	Downtown Graton	x	x	x		Escrow closed April 5, 2019. Tracking match.
Guerneville River Park Phase 2***	5	5	Central Guerneville	x	x	x		Initiating project; processing extension request
Helen Putnam Regional Park Extension	56	2	Petaluma					Initiating project
Keiser Park Expansion	2	4	Windsor					Initiating project
Maxwell Farms	79	1	Northwest of Sonoma	x	n/a			Drafting Documents
Montage Resort Park	36	4	North Healdsburg					Initiating project
Paula Lane Open Space Preserve	11	2	West Petaluma	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Petaluma River Park	20	2	Petaluma					Initiating project
River Lane***	1	5	West of Guerneville	x	x	x	x	Finalizing docs; Grant extended to 10/25/24
Roseland Creek Community Park - Phase 1	3	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	x			City is reviewing documents (CE, RC)
Roseland Village Public Space***	1	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a			Drafting documents
SMART Pathway – Hearn to Bellevue*	6	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a	x		Finalizing documents
SMART Pathway - Payran to S. Point	14	2	Petaluma	x	n/a			SMART is reviewing documents (CE, RC)
Southeast Santa Rosa Greenway***	61	1	Southeast Santa Rosa	x		x		Initiating project; project extended to 10/25/24
Steamer Landing Park Development (McNe)	27**	2	Downtown Petaluma	x	n/a			Initiating project
Taylor Mtn ROSP - Cooper Creek Addition	54	3	Southeast Santa Rosa	x				Closed 4/1/20. Tracking match
Total Acres:	674							

* District approved a 2-year extension

** Restoration/Development Project on previous acquisition.

TRANSFER	Acreage (approximate)	Supervisory District	Transaction Type	Project Design	Transfer Agreement	Approvals/Baseline	Escrow	Comments
Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve	1,290	1	Transfer	x	x	x	x	Close escrow late July 2021
Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve	960	1	Transfer					Initiating project
Tierra Vegetables	15	4	Resale	x				Resale
Wright Hill Ranch	1,236	5	Transfer	x	x	x	x	Close escrow late August 2021
Total Acres:	3,501							