

# AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION & OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

**William Keene**  
General Manager

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District permanently protects the diverse agricultural, natural resource, and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations.

BUDGET AT A GLANCE	FY 2018-2019
Total Expenditures	\$51,169,811
Total Revenues/Use of Fund Balance	\$28,126,181
Total General Fund Contribution	\$0
Total Staff	27.50
% Funded by General Fund	0%

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

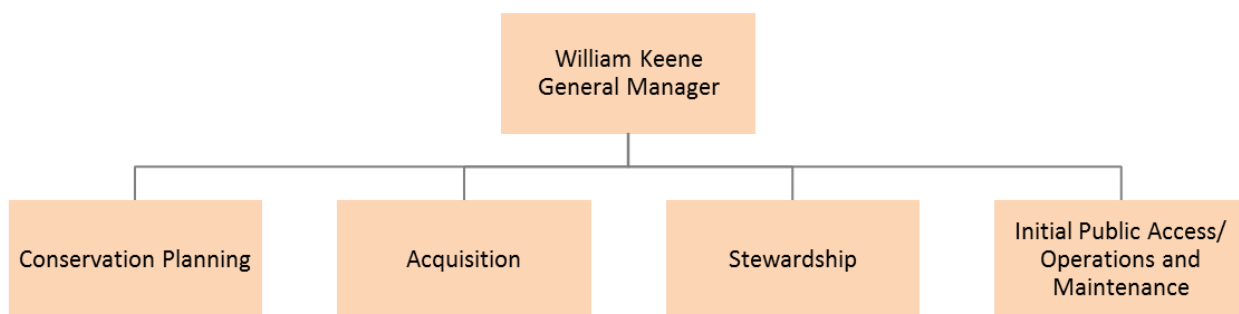
The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (District) partners with willing landowners, public agencies, and non-profit organizations to permanently protect land through agreements with landowners (conservation easements), purchase of land, and stewardship activities on existing easements and District-owned properties. District acquisitions were previously guided by the 2006 long-range acquisition plan, “Connecting Communities and the Land,” which reflected community desires and values and directs preservation to the highest priority farmlands, greenbelts, natural areas, and recreational lands. The District is currently working towards implementation of its “Vital Lands Initiative”, which has built upon the existing guiding documents, while incorporating advanced science and current discussions with the public on future lands to be prioritized for protection in Sonoma County.

The District is funded by Measure F, a Sonoma County sales tax measure. Most of this funding goes toward acquisition of land and easements, stewardship activities, and department operations. Up to 10% of sales tax revenue can be used for initial public access to, and operation and maintenance of, lands purchased by the District.

The District is organized into three program areas. **Conservation Planning** develops and analyzes data to ensure the highest value land is protected. **Acquisition** purchases conservation easements and land to protect farmland, greenbelts, natural areas, and recreational lands. **Stewardship** monitors conservation easements and manages properties that the District owns to ensure that the values purchased are protected in perpetuity. While not a separate program, **Initial Public Access, Operation and Maintenance** reflects expenditures by the District for eligible expenditures and negotiated payments to other agencies for eligible work on properties intended for recreational use.

For more information, call (707) 565-7360, or visit <http://sonomaopenspace.org/>

## DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# FINANCIAL SUMMARIES

## Expenditures by Program Area

	FY 2017-2018 Adopted Budget	FY 2018-2019 Recommended Budget	Change from FY 2017-2018 Adopted	% Change from FY 2017-2018 Adopted
Conservation Planning	2,783,259	3,165,646	382,388	13.7
Acquisition	29,881,841	39,330,590	9,448,750	31.6
Stewardship	4,506,631	5,786,074	1,279,444	28.4
Initial Public Access, O&M	1,675,833	2,877,500	1,201,667	71.7
<b>Total Expenditures by Program</b>	<b>38,847,563</b>	<b>51,159,811</b>	<b>12,312,248</b>	<b>31.7</b>

## Permanent Positions by Program Area

	FY 2017-2018 Adopted Budget	FY 2018-2019 Recommended Budget	Change from FY 2017-2018 Adopted	% Change from FY 2017-2018 Adopted
Conservation Planning	8.33	8.33	0.00	0.0
Acquisition	8.33	8.33	0.00	0.0
Stewardship	10.83	10.83	0.00	0.0
<b>Total Permanent Positions</b>	<b>27.50</b>	<b>27.50</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0</b>

## Department Budget Details

	FY 2017-2018 Adopted Budget	FY 2018-2019 Recommended Budget	Change from FY 2017-2018 Adopted	% Change from FY 2017- 2018 Adopted
<b>Expenditures by Character</b>				
Salaries and Benefits	4,298,999	4,394,633	95,634	2.2
Services and Supplies	5,178,980	6,563,949	1,384,969	26.7
Capital Expenditures	25,165,624	34,877,500	9,711,876	38.6
Matching Grants	3,531,270	3,901,270	370,000	10.5
Transfers within the County*	682,690	1,432,459	749,769	109.8
<b>Total Expenditures by Character</b>	<b>38,857,563</b>	<b>51,169,811</b>	<b>12,312,248</b>	<b>31.7</b>
<b>Revenues/Reimbursements/Use of Fund Balance (Sources)</b>				
Open Space District Sales Tax Revenue	21,320,000	23,043,630	1,723,630	8.1
State, Federal, & Other Govt. Revenue	4,000,000	5,500,000	1,500,000	37.5
Other Revenues**	810,000	4,645,000	3,835,000	473.5
Use of Fund Balance	12,041,583	16,515,691	4,474,108	37.2
Transfers/Reimbursements within County*	685,980	1,465,490	779,510	0.0
<b>Total Revenues/Use of Fund Balance</b>	<b>38,857,563</b>	<b>51,169,811</b>	<b>12,312,248</b>	<b>31.7</b>

\*Transfers/reimbursements primarily consist of transfers from the Initial Public Access, Operations and Maintenance fund to Stewardship for Operations and Maintenance work.

\*\*Other Revenues consist primarily of donations and contributions related to the purchase of easements and fee lands, as well as smaller amounts of interest income and rent.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

## FY 2017-2018 Accomplishments

- Addressed urgent damage to District-owned properties caused by the 2017 Sonoma Complex fires, including replacement of burned culverts, securing and cleanup of burned structures, and installing erosion control measures to protect local streams.
- Completed the development of a comprehensive, integrated plan, the Vital Lands Initiative, to guide District conservation actions for the next 15 years. The effort included substantial community engagement opportunities to inform the plan development process, as well as significant development of new data to support conservation prioritization and is set to be approved by the Board in the summer of 2018. The draft Vital Lands Initiative is available at: <http://www.sonomaopenspace.org/projects/vital-lands-initiative/>
- Acquired an agricultural conservation easement over the 330 acres of grazing land that is an essential component of the McClelland Dairy. Completed appraisals on two additional conservation easements that will be presented to the Board prior to the end of the fiscal year.
- Executed agreements for the Andy's Unity Park Matching Grant Project which included the acquisition of a conservation easement and recreation covenant. Reviewing appraisal for two additional Matching Grant Projects that will be presented to the Board prior to the end of the fiscal year.

## FY 2018-2019 Objectives

- Execute key elements of the Vital Lands Initiative via a set of Board approved implementation plans, in all of the key areas outlined in the District expenditure plan.
- Plan and begin implementation of key data integration efforts to ensure the efficient use of District staff and financial resources and the ability to rapidly and effectively share information with the Board, partners and the community through dashboards and other online tools.
- Acquire six conservation easements that protect natural and scenic resources while furthering sustainable agricultural and forestry practices and recreational opportunities and initiate ongoing stewardship of each acquisition. The increase in Other Revenue is primarily driven by anticipated donations and contributions related to purchase of these easements.
- Complete transfer of two future Regional Park and Open Space Preserves to Sonoma County Regional Parks while retaining a conservation easement and recreation covenant to ensure protection of conservation values and permanent public access. This includes completion of the acquisition of lands and the transfer of all District properties that comprise the future Mark West Creek Regional Park and Open Space Preserve and Carrington Coast Ranch. The \$9.4 million increase in the Acquisition budget for FY 2018-2019 is tied to the expectation that these purchases as well as significant easement purchases will be completed during the fiscal year.
- Recommend the acceptance of projects totaling up to \$4.0 million to the Board through the 2018 Matching Grant Program. This is an over \$1.0 million increase from prior years' allocations to provide additional support to fire impacted communities. In addition, present four Matching Grant Projects accepted into the program during previous cycles to the Board for approval of grant agreements.
- Implement post-fire monitoring and land management practices on District-owned land affected by the 2017 Sonoma Complex fires, and pro-active fuels reduction on properties outside of the burned area.
- Determine a funding target for the Stewardship Reserve in coordination with the District's Fiscal Oversight Commission and receive Board of Directors approval for the model and target amount. Consequently, develop an investment strategy to implement the target set by the Board in order to ensure that District held easements are protected in perpetuity.

# DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Fire Impact

### Fire Recovery:

- During the FY 2017-2018, the District realigned staff resources to focus on addressing fire-related damage on District properties and organizing more than 150 people from 60 organizations in the Watershed Collaborative whose final report, *Living in a Fire Adapted Landscape*, analyzed issues and presented short and long-term mitigation measures. The report is available at: [http://www.sonomaopenspace.org/wp-content/uploads/Living\\_in\\_a\\_Fire-Adapted\\_Landscape-Priorities\\_for-Resiliency\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.sonomaopenspace.org/wp-content/uploads/Living_in_a_Fire-Adapted_Landscape-Priorities_for-Resiliency_FINAL.pdf)
- The District is funding a full-time position focusing on natural resources in the newly formed Office of Recovery and Resiliency jointly with the Sonoma County Water Agency. The position was created in FY 2017-2018 and will continue for up to five years.
- The Conservation Planning program will continue to implement measures in the Watershed Collaborative report during FY 2017-2018 by evaluating the response of working and natural lands to the fires and the role of land management in fire severity and intensity. This will help assess areas most at risk and identify acquisition and stewardship actions to build resiliency to future fires. The increase in fire related activity is reflected in the \$382,000 increase to the Conservation Planning budget.
- The Stewardship Program post-fire recovery efforts on District-owned properties have been consistent with the short and long-term recommendations identified within the Watershed Collaborative Report. In 2017-2018 these included infrastructure repairs, debris removal, pollution prevention and erosion control, hazardous tree assessments and removal, invasive species control and revegetation where needed. These efforts will continue in FY 2018-2019 and beyond, along with implementation of preventative tools such as shaded fuel breaks and prescribed burns on District-owned properties. This activity will increase the budget in Stewardship for FY 2018-2019 by \$529,000. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) claim for approximately \$250,000 is being prepared, but the majority of the work is on natural lands and does not qualify for FEMA Public Assistance.
- In addition to the work on District-owned land, staff will continue to connect conservation easement landowners and neighbors to additional resources for recovery on privately owned lands as they become available.

### Service Delivery Adjustments:

- The 2017 Sonoma Complex fires had a significant impact on all aspects of work at the District. Refocusing resources delayed the completion of the Vital Lands Initiative and several acquisitions and property transfers. These projects are back on track following this delay. In FY 2018-2019, the District's core mission will not be affected, but changed priorities and situations will continue to inform the District's work post-fire.
- Funding available through the District's Matching Grant Program for is being expanded by more than \$1.0 million in FY 2018-2019 and will prioritize projects that help support recovery efforts in fire-impacted communities. Because payments are made on a reimbursement basis, appropriations are increasing by a more modest \$370,000.

## Key Issues

- Finalization and adoption by the Board of Directors of the Vital Lands Initiative will provide primary policy direction for the District over the coming years. Key questions to be addressed include acquisition prioritization and creating a strategy for funding a Stewardship Reserve that will provide funding to support stewardship work on easements beyond the end of the sales tax measure in 2031.
- The District is increasing its budget for capital acquisitions by \$9.4 million based on the expectation of a high level of purchases in FY 2018-2019. This includes purchases of lands in the Mark West Creek area that were expected in FY 2017-2018 but were delayed due to the fires, as well as additional easement acquisitions. Services and Supplies are increasing by \$1.4 million, largely tied to increased maintenance and conservation planning work tied to fire recovery.

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## **BUDGET HEARING CHANGES AND ACTIONS**

Adopted as recommended.