



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-14-67
Meeting 14-10
April 9, 2014

AGENDA ITEM 7

AGENDA ITEM

Approval of the Recommendation from the Planning and Natural Resources Committee for Demolition of District Structures

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G.M.", is written over the text "GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS:".

Approve the recommendation of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee for the following items:

1. Approve the demolition of the "Skunk House" and "Caretaker House" on the Hicks Creek Ranch property in Sierra Azul Preserve due to their deteriorated condition as a revision to their previous approval for residential use. Approve sale of any of the equestrian facility infrastructure not salvaged for District use.
2. Approve the demolition of the three ranch barns on the South Area Outpost property (A.K.A. "Slaght") in Sierra Azul Preserve in accordance with the findings of the staff evaluation, conducted per the Board approved preliminary use and management plan.
3. Approve the demolition of the main house, utility building, two sheds, and associated infrastructure on the Maas property in Sierra Azul Preserve in accordance with the staff evaluation, conducted per the Board approved preliminary use and management plan.
4. Approve the demolition of the winery barn on the Sherrill Winery property (A.K.A. "Grainger et. al") in Montebello Preserve in accordance with the staff evaluation, conducted per the Board approved preliminary use and management plan.
5. Direct staff to develop a construction and demolition policy on the salvage, reuse, and recycling of construction and demolition materials for review by the Planning and Natural Resource Committee.

SUMMARY

Multiple structures, on several properties owned by the District, need to be demolished. Some of the structures require Board approval prior to demolition. These properties include Hicks Creek Ranch (R-08-64), Maas (R-09-126), and South Area Outpost (R-10-114 and 10-117) in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve (Sierra Azul) and the Sherrill Winery barn (R-98-114) in Montebello Open Space Preserve (Montebello). The structures on the Crites property (R-11-73) in Sierra Azul and the McDonald Ranch House (La Honda Creek Master Plan) in La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (La Honda Creek) have already been approved for demolition by the Board and will be demolished at the same time as the demolition projects under consideration in this report. The Planning and Natural Resource Committee reviewed the four demolition projects listed above and recommended them to the full Board for approval. It also recommended that the Board direct staff to develop a Construction and Demolition Policy concerning salvage, reuse, and recycling.

DISCUSSION

With the recent hiring of the Contingent Project Manager in Operations, the department has made progress in evaluating structures for demolition that no longer provide any net benefit to the District. The demolition of dilapidated structures was included in the FY2013-14 Action Plan and is in the FY2014-15 Action Plan.

Staff has evaluated the proposed demolitions in light of the Board approved list of *Factors to Consider for Existing Structures*, which was adopted by the Board to facilitate the evaluation and discussion of the Mt. Umunhum radar tower (R-12-91). The list of Board approved factors are:

Decision Making Factors to Consider for Existing Structures	
A.	Board-Adopted District Policies
B.	Compatibility with Open Space Character of the Site
C.	Historic Value
D.	Partnership Opportunities / Cooperation
E.	Potential Financial Cost, Including Liability and Management
F.	Proposed and Potential Uses
G.	Public Sentiment and Input
H.	Tradeoffs and Impacts on District Resources
I.	Visitor Experience

Staff Evaluation of Hicks Creek Ranch Former Housing Structures

Current Condition: Hicks Creek Ranch was originally envisioned to be suitable for staff housing, in the Skunk House, and required a caretaker, in the Caretaker House, to maintain the property’s infrastructure. A lack of potable water, the absence of a fire escape route, and the poor condition of the structures led staff to subsequently determine that the two structures are not suitable for staff/caretakers. There are five other structures on the property previously approved for demolition by the Board of Directors that are also dilapidated. The open space character of the site is severely compromised by the dilapidated structures. Because some of the structures date back to the 1930s-40s, a historic assessment is underway; the structures do not appear to have any historical significance. Initial site evaluations determined one structure, the Pool House, contains guano indicative of bat roosting. Summer surveys will be scheduled to determine the occupancy and species.

Liabilities: The property experiences regular trespass, vandalism, and was the site of a suicide. It is located along the wild-urban interface. For these reasons, the Operations Department patrols these structures with regularity at the expense of other priorities. Commercial or public access to site by vehicle is impermissible due to Santa Clara County’s determination that the access road is not sufficient to allow for a commercial operation. The structures are known to contain lead paint, asbestos, and rat excrement.

Advantages: Demolition of the unsafe structures will reduce liability, trespass, vandalism, and free up patrol to focus on other areas of Sierra Azul. Removal of the structures will add to the open space character of the property and permit long term planning efforts to consider non-vehicular recreational use.

Staff Evaluation of Hicks Creek Ranch Equestrian Facility (Exhibit A)

Current Condition: The prior owner of the Hicks Creek Ranch property constructed an extensive facility in the back part of the property intended to be a commercial equestrian operation. Once the facility was made known to Santa Clara County, they deemed the use unacceptable in part due to the unstable and insufficient one-lane access road, an assessment that was subsequently confirmed by a consultant hired to produce a road inventory for the property. The preliminary U&M considered the sale or auction of the equestrian facilities if the Bear Creek Stables were not interested in using the facility.

Liabilities: The value of the equestrian infrastructure will diminish with time as the materials degrade and the abandoned structures attract trespass and vandalism. District staff concluded no vehicular or commercial use of the road was appropriate and therefore the equestrian facilities were not suitable for this location.

Advantages: Salvage some of the infrastructure for District use at Bear Creek Stables and sale of the remainder will make the best use of value of the stable infrastructure.

Staff Evaluation of Structures on the Maas Property (Exhibit B)

Current Condition: The Maas property has a house and accessory structures that were originally considered potentially useful as part of a real property exchange with San Jose Water Company, which owns the surrounding land. The Real Property Department has determined that the structures would actually inhibit a land exchange and recommend approval for the demolition of the house and accessory structures, which include a utility building, two small sheds, and a garage/carport. Emergency access to the property is limited by an unrated bridge on San Jose Water land and therefore no residential use is possible. The structure was built after the Loma Prieta earthquake and has no historic value. The structures are well sealed and do not contain bats.

Liabilities: Maas is a very remote property to access and is not contiguous with District land. Patrol is infrequent. Trespassers started a fire in the woodstove and the lower level has suffered smoke damage as a result. The structures are known to contain asbestos and rat excrement.

Advantages: Removal of the structures will enhance the open space character and watershed function of District and San Jose Water Company land. Removing the structures will reduce District liability and refocus patrol on priority areas.

Staff Evaluation of Structures at South Area Outpost (Exhibit C)

Current Condition: The South Area Outpost, where some District staff report to duty, has three remnant ranch barns that require demolition. A house, rented to District staff, a house used as the Outpost, and two sheds are utilized by staff. The remnant farm structures provide no utility to the Outpost. The barns feature construction from many different eras (1930s onward) and reflect the prior owner's use of the site. A historic assessment is underway. No bats are present on the site.

Liabilities: The barns are known to contain lead paint and asbestos and are structurally unsound.

Advantages: Demolition of the barns will remove a hazard from employee working areas and add to the open space character of the site. Demolition of the barns is a prerequisite to the District considering further development of the Outpost as a workplace.

Staff Evaluation of Structures on Sherrill Property (Exhibit D)

Current Condition: The Sherrill Winery Barn was in poor condition at the time of purchase. In the preliminary use and management plan for the property its long term use was to be assessed at a later date. Now sixteen years after acquisition, its condition is much worse. The structure was considered by the South Skyline Association as a potential volunteer fire station, but they determined this idea was not feasible. Large gaps in the roof, rotting timbers, and the overall condition of the structure detract from the open space character of the site. The adjacent residence is in good habitable condition and is currently rented by a member of the public. Staff will give the tenant notice of the proposed demolition timeline as soon as a contract is awarded. It was built in the 1970s and has no historic value. Bats are not present on site.

Liabilities: The presence of asbestos and rat excrement is a liability. Parts of the roof have blown off during storms and are potentially dangerous.

Advantages: Demolition of this structure will reduce District liability and enhance the open space character of the site.

Previously Approved by the Board for Demolition

The Crites property, located in Sierra Azul adjacent to the Hicks Creek Ranch, was approved for demolition by the Board July 13th, 2011 as recommended by staff in report R-11-73. A foundation and retaining wall is cut into the steep hillside. The demolition will require special considerations by the equipment operators and some slope stabilization after demolition.

The McDonald Ranch House, located in La Honda Creek Preserve near the Red Barn, was approved for demolition through the Master Plan and its Mitigated Negative Declaration. The structure has recently been evaluated by an Architectural Historian and determined to not meet the criteria for historical significance. The San Mateo County Historic Resource Advisory Board concurs with this assessment and asked District staff to take pictures of the inside prior to demolition.

Current Project Scope

None of the structures have any known historical significance. The District has hired a consultant to conduct a historical review which will be submitted to the permitting agency within each county. Any structure that is determined to have historical significance will not be demolished and will be brought back to the Board after next steps are determined. Abatement of lead, asbestos, and household hazardous materials is particular to each structure. All of the structures have had preliminary site assessments for the presence of bats. Only the McDonald Ranch House in La Honda and the Pool House at Hicks Creek Ranch in Sierra Azul require summer surveys. Site surveys immediately prior to demolition and potential exclusions will occur on all structures that are not well sealed. Site grading and landform restoration will be considered as part of each project, though no significant grading is anticipated on any of the projects, except for the Crites property.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of the structure demolition program described above is estimated to cost \$720,000. Funding is included in the approved FY2014-15 Budget. This amount includes CEQA, permits, abatement for hazardous materials, bat surveys and protection, demolition, and site restoration where appropriate. Any potential fiscal impacts associated with a Construction and Demolition Policy will be assessed as the policy is developed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

The Planning and Natural Resources Committee approved recommending to the Board demolition of structures on all four properties. They also added a recommendation to the Board for staff to prepare a Construction and Demolition Policy that encourages salvage, reuse, and, recycling of material to guide the District in the reduction of waste during construction and demolition projects.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Adjoining owners within 300 feet of structures proposed for demolition were notified of this meeting.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The structures already approved for demolition were determined by the Board at the General Manager's recommendation to be categorically exempt under Section 15304 (Minor alterations to land) of the California Environmental Quality Act. Staff anticipates using the categorical exemption for the remainder of the demolitions, like the recent Powell property demolition, unless a historically or biologically significant resource is identified. The Board will be presented with the appropriate CEQA documentation for certification at the time of contract approval. Directing staff to develop a Construction and Demolition policy is not a "project" under CEQA.

NEXT STEPS

If the Board approves the demolition of these structures, Operations will complete the required historical analysis and bat surveys and then will solicit bids to demolish the structures along with those already approved by the Board for demolition. In Sierra Azul, the Hicks Creek Ranch, Crites, Maas, and South Area Outpost demolitions are planned to be accomplished under one contract. The Sherrill Winery in Monte Bello and the McDonald Ranch House, in La Honda Creek, are planned to be accomplished under another contract. Approval of final demolition contracts will be agendized for Board approval in the future.

If the Board directs staff to develop a Construction and Demolition Reuse, Salvage and Recycling Policy, staff will develop a draft policy and submit the policy to the Planning and Natural Resources Committee for review during FY 2014-15.

Attachments:

- A. Hicks Creek Ranch Site Plan and Photos – Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve
- B. Maas Parcel – Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve
- C. South Area Outpost aka Slight – Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve
- D. Sherrill Winery Barn – Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

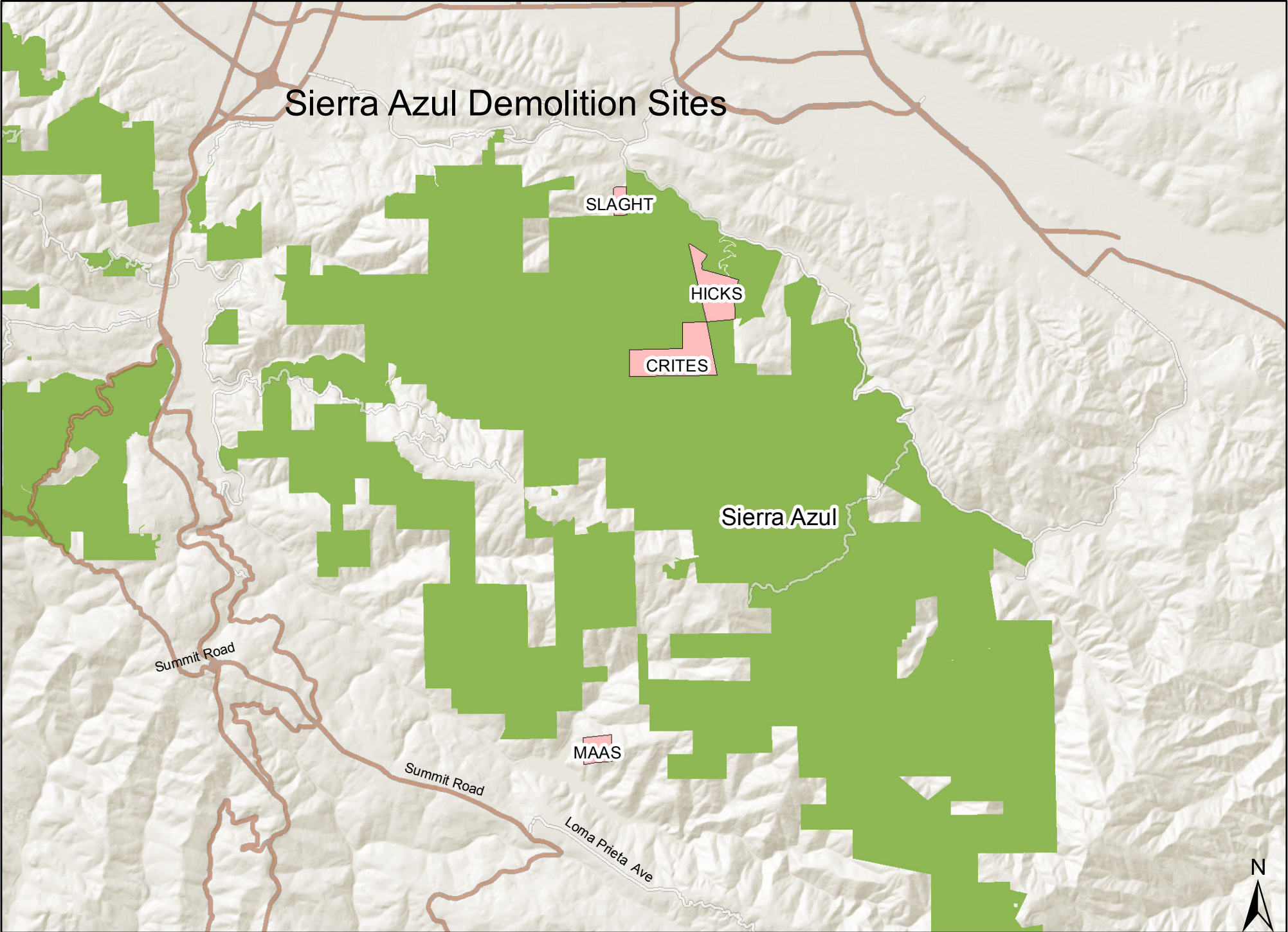
Responsible Department Head:

Brian Malone, Acting Operations Manager

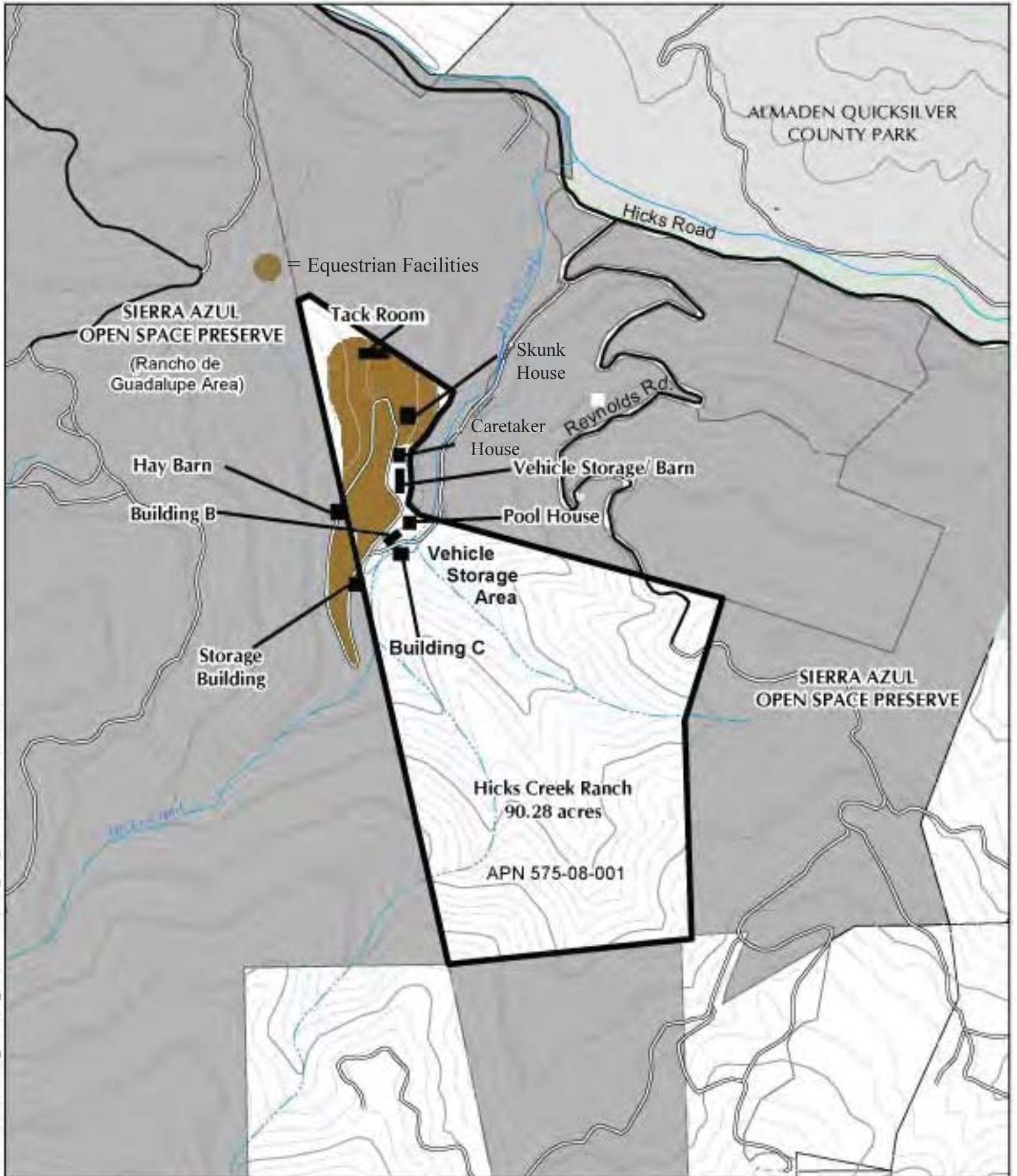
Prepared by:

Aaron Hébert, Contingent Project Manager

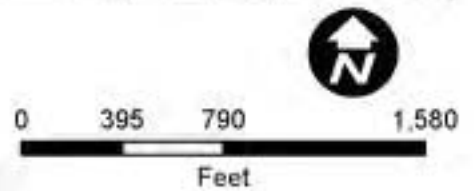
Exhibit A: Hicks Creek and Sierra Azul Map



A1: Hicks Creek Ranch Site Map



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A2 - Hicks Creek Skunk House



A3 - Hicks Creek Caretaker House



A4 - Hicks Creek Equestrian Barn



A5 - Hicks Creek Equestrian Corrals



A6 - Hicks Creek Grain Storage Barn



A7 - Hicks Creek Equestrian Eurowalker

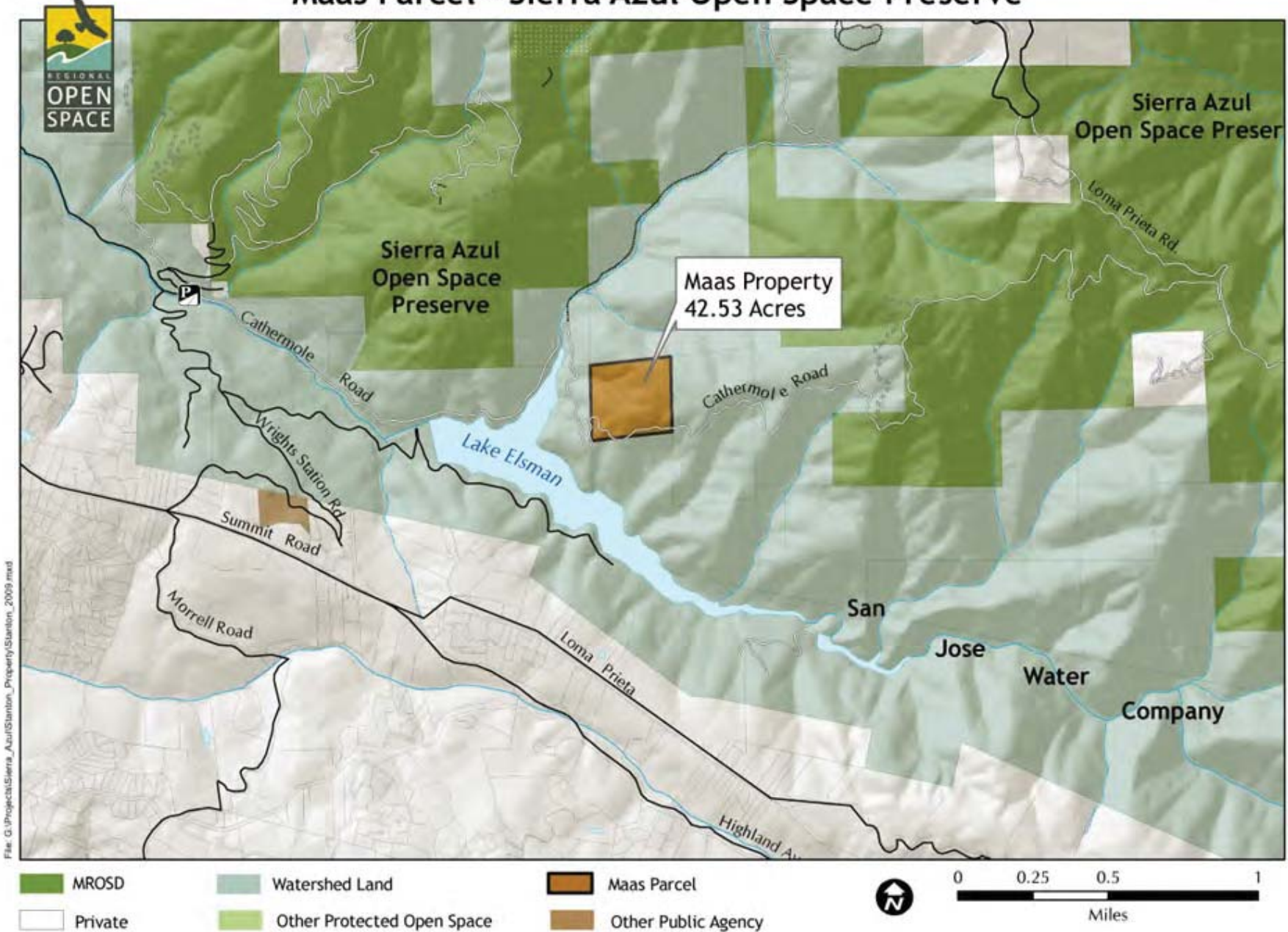


A8 - Hicks Creek Equestrian Lockers



Exhibit B: Maas Property

Maas Parcel - Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve



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B1 - Maas Site Plan



B2 - Maas Main House



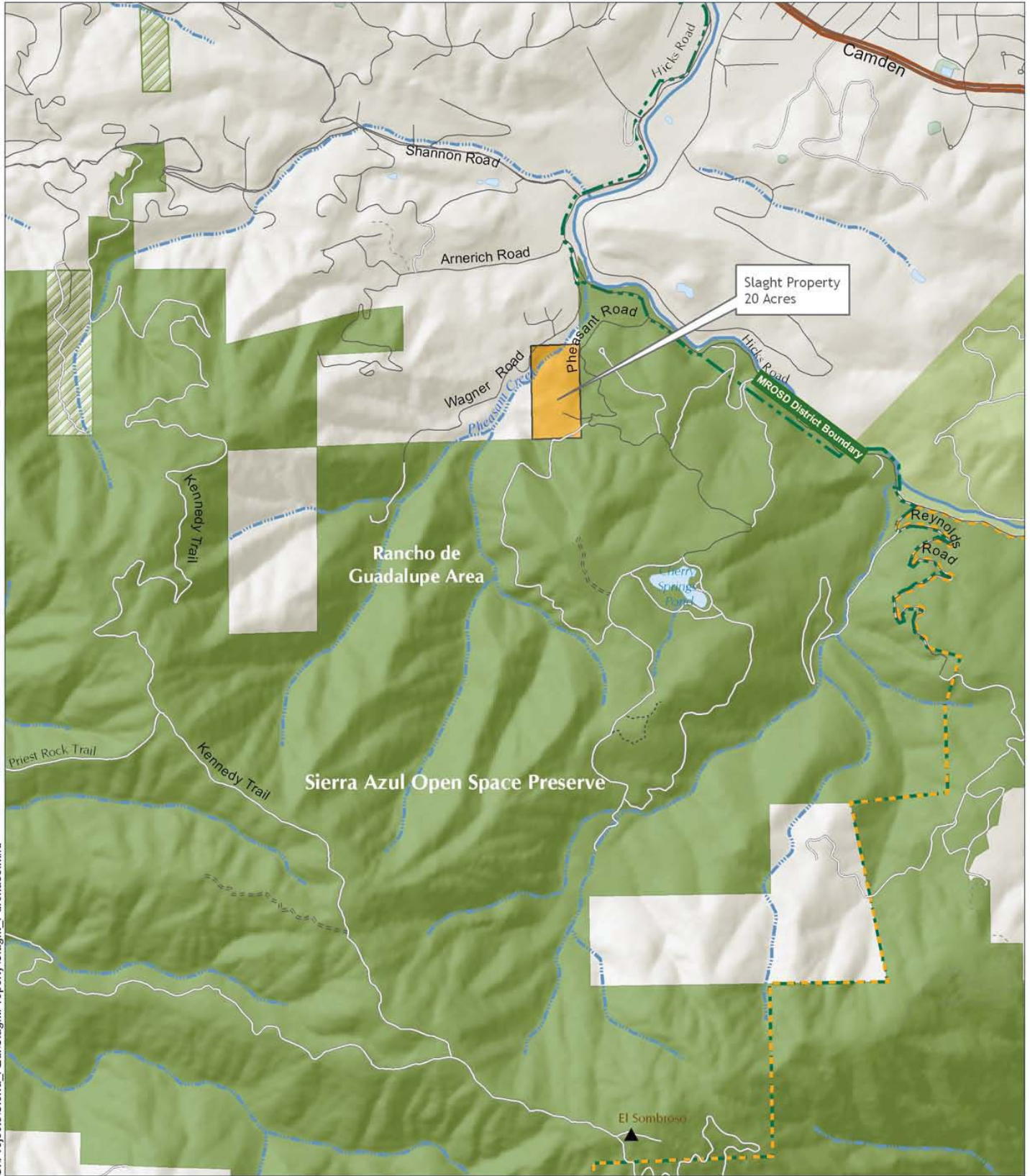
B3 - Maas Utility Building



B4 - Maas Sheds



Exhibit C: South Area Outpost (SAO) AKA Slaughter



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Proposed Addition of Slaughter Property, Rancho de Guadalupe Area of Sierra Azul OSP

- Proposed Addition
- MROSD
- Other Protected Open Space or Park Lands
- Conservation or Agricultural Easement
- MROSD Sphere of Influence
- MROSD Boundary

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

July 2010



C1 - SAO Site Plan



C2 - SAO Barn 1



C3 - SAO Barn 2



C4 - SAO Barn 3



Exhibit D: Sherill Winery Barn Map



D1 - Sherrill Site Plan



D2 - Sherrill Barn South View



D3- Sherrill Barn North View



D4 - Sherrill Barn Interior

