



Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Major Accomplishments



FISCAL YEAR 2017-18 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Mission Statement:

*To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity;
protect and restore the natural environment;
and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment.*

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Coastside Protection Mission Statement:

*To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional
significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage
viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive
public enjoyment and education.*

The accomplishments listed below highlight the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) focused efforts on each part of its mission—land acquisition and preservation; natural resources protection and restoration; public access, education, and outreach; and for the coastside, supporting local agriculture. These accomplishments are extensive and varied, and include major projects to open new preserve areas to the public, including Mount Umunhum, lower La Honda Creek Preserve, and the western area of Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve. They also show extensive progress on resource restoration priorities, education and outreach to diverse visitors, collaborative partnerships with other organizations, and ongoing administrative and operational requirements of preserving over 63,000 acres of public open space. On the San Mateo County Coast, accomplishments include improving agricultural infrastructure to support the conservation grazing program while preserving the coast's rural character.

Fiscal Year 2017-18 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) was a busy and productive year!

LAND ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION

- ❖ Purchased, exchanged, or received gifts of 221.64 acres of open space lands valued at \$4.3 million dollars, including:
 - 45-acre riparian conservation and public access easement over private property along Lobitos Creek as an addition to **Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve**, protecting significant scenic, open space, riparian, and natural wildlife habitat values. The easement also contains provisions for a possible future public trail through the area.
 - 153.59-acre Twin Creeks Property in the Mt. Umunhum area of **Sierra Azul Preserve**, providing water quality protection within the Los Alamos Creek watershed, continuity of wildlife habitat corridors, and a potential future trail connection with

Rancho Canada de Oro Open Space Preserve. A \$750,000 grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation offset the \$2.8 million purchase cost.

- 9.37-acres and two trail easements totaling 2.2-acres as additions to ***El Sereno Preserve*** to fill a gap in the Bay Area Ridge Trail between El Sereno Preserve and Sanborn County Park.
 - One Redwood Park parcel gift totaling 0.11 acres to ***Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve***.
- ❖ Secured a key 0.6 mile Ravenswood Bay Trail Easement from the City and County of San Francisco to close a gap within the SF Bay Trail and connect 80 miles of continuous Bay Trail as an addition to ***Ravenswood Preserve***.
 - ❖ Granted a 36-acre Cultural Conservation Easement to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band atop Mount Umunhum Summit in ***Sierra Azul Preserve***, a place central to their creation story, for the tribe to assist with natural resource stewardship provide opportunities for cultural relearning; sharing of indigenous plant restoration techniques; and deepening public understanding of Native American history.
 - ❖ Finalized and recorded a public access easement, drainage easements, and fee title on Mt. Umunhum Road in ***Sierra Azul Preserve*** to secure public vehicular access to the summit and allow for ongoing maintenance of the newly completed road improvements; also secured a separate easement to Mount Thayer for ongoing patrol and maintenance of District lands.
 - ❖ Completed a Phase 2 environmental assessment and ranch road assessment on a potential future property transfer that would become part of ***Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve***.

NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

- ❖ Completed numerous natural resource protection and restoration projects in ***Sierra Azul Preserve***, including:
 - Year Six (6) of the coordinated monitoring effort to reduce mercury within the Guadalupe River Watershed.
 - Addressed wildlife entrapment issues inside the Mount Umunhum radar tower.
 - Installed native plantings at Mount Umunhum and surrounding areas to restore native landscapes and meet permit requirements for trail and roadwork associated with the summit project.
 - Performed biological monitoring to protect local wildlife during the demolition of dilapidated structures on the former Twin Creeks property.
 - Finalized resource agency permits (CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Army Corps of Engineers) and performed biological monitoring to protect local wildlife and water quality in support of the Hendrys Creek Restoration Project.

- Collaborated with outside researchers to study newt toxins and insects at Mount Umunhum.
- ❖ Continued numerous natural resource protection and restoration projects in ***La Honda Creek Preserve***:
- Hosted a Central Coast Rangeland Coalition meeting at the preserve to exchange information and lessons learned with fellow experts in natural resource stewardship and agriculture.
 - Completed a fisheries restoration project, installing large woody habitat within San Gregorio Creek to improve salmonid habitat.
 - Performed annual California red-legged frog monitoring in support of the District's recovery permit for the federally threatened species and participated in the successful release of a rehabilitated California red-legged frog.
 - Conducted the 1st year of Marbled Murrelet surveys in upper La Honda Creek to inform the District's Restoration Forestry Demonstration Project.
 - Continued compliance work associated with the San Gregorio Watershed adjudication.
- ❖ Continued natural resource protection and restoration projects in ***Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve*** in preparation for opening the preserve to the public in 2019, including:
- Assessed the presence of cultural resources at ten sites, as required by the Bear Creek Master Plan EIR, in advance of Phase 1 road and trail repairs, parking lot construction, and pond improvements.
 - Began the 1st year of targeted invasive species removal in riparian areas, which is funded in part through a 5-year Santa Clara Valley Water District grant.
 - Installed western pond turtle basking platforms at Upper Lake that will be featured in an interpretive panel to promote community science and learning when the preserve opens to the public.
 - Investigated an old landfill to determine size and potential characterization for further investigations.
 - Established and filed pre-1914 water rights, installed meters, and completed required annual reporting.
 - Executed the Bat Habitat Enhancement and Relocation Plan to protect bat colonies at Alma College.
- ❖ Provided ***District-Wide*** support related to natural resource protection and restoration, including:
- Implemented eleven (11) new invasive species management projects, adding 7.4 acres to the District's 1,238 acres under active management.

- Trained staff and purchased equipment to initiate a new program to monitor, survey, and provide permitting assistance for protected bat species across District lands.
- Trained staff on the Resource Agency permitting process related to District projects.
- Collaborated with outside researchers to study the restoration response of two special status salamanders (Santa Cruz Black and California Giant).
- Provided ongoing support of Measure AA-funded priority projects (permitting, CEQA compliance, pre-construction surveys, construction monitoring).
- Managed fifteen (15) on-call biological consultants to support District-wide projects.
- Investigated, reported, and posted informational signs and closures in response to ongoing mountain lion sightings and encounters to help maintain visitor safety.
- Installed crumb-clean educational signage to protect native birds and eggs from predation.
- Began 1st year of federally endangered Marbled Murrelet surveys to understand the scale and extent of the current population and inform future management actions.
- Launched a Natural Resources Service Request Form to improve inter-departmental coordination and response.
- Actively participated in the Wildlife Society, and attended the Western Section Wildlife Society Conference.
- Collaborated with outside researchers to study hantavirus distribution, rare plants, climate change, and bird counts at multiple preserves.
- Completed the Coastal Riparian Corridor Study to inform the protection of coastal streams.
- Completed a baseline Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory of District administrative operations and researched GHG reduction targets to inform the development of a new Climate Change Policy and Climate Action Plan, which the Board adopted in October 2018.
- Initiated development of the District-wide Prescribed Fire Program to enhance habitat management and reduce the wildland fire hazard on District land.
- Trained staff to serve as Resource Advisors on wildland fire incidents as part of the District's Wildland Fire Management program.
- Developed new water resources policies to guide the conservation, use, stewardship, and protection of water resources on District land.
- Provided annual training for staff and contractors on pesticide safety, the Invasive Pest Management Program, and related best management practices.
- Worked with outside researchers to study non-chemical approaches and seedbank longevity to inform the control of the invasive and noxious slender false brome plant.

- ❖ Completed numerous resource agency permit streamlining efforts, including:
 - Maintained strong relationships with US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to support protected species recovery work under the District's Recovery Permit.
 - Received permit approval from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and Regional Water Quality Control Board for up to 50 discrete maintenance projects under the District's Routine Maintenance Agreements.
 - Renewed and expanded the District's Routine Maintenance Agreement with CDFW for five additional years to continue a streamlined permitting approach for maintenance work.
 - Began programmatic permitting renewal with the Regional Water Quality Control Board for routine maintenance projects.
 - Secured outside expert assistance to streamline the permitting process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for capital and maintenance projects.
- ❖ Hosted Mountain Lion Awareness Week at **Rancho San Antonio Preserve** from June 17 to June 22, 2017, kicking off the week with a team of five Volunteer Trail Patrol teams traveling several routes to make contact with preserve visitors. District staff and volunteers also hosted information tables near Deer Hollow Farm, and posted information on social media.
- ❖ Completed bathymetric (depth) surveys and installed staff gages at Horseshoe Lake in **Skyline Ridge Preserve**, and continued ongoing monitoring of large ponds to maintain water rights.
- ❖ Completed the 1st year of a stream gauge and sediment study at **El Corte De Madera Creek Preserve** to assess the effectiveness of erosion reduction projects under the preserve-wide Watershed Protection Project.
- ❖ Completed focused biological surveys and habitat characterization for the California red-legged frog at two ponds and nearby streams within Madonna Creek Ranch in **Miramontes Ridge Preserve**.
- ❖ Continued the Highway 17 Wildlife and Regional Trail Crossings project, identifying and analyzing new crossing alternatives in response to partner, stakeholder, and public comments.
- ❖ Expanded in-house and consultant capacity to remove invasive bullfrogs. Successfully removed the first confirmed bullfrogs at **La Honda Creek Preserve**.
- ❖ Implemented western pond turtle monitoring at multiple preserves leading to the removal of an invasive red-bellied cooter from Alpine Pond in **Skyline Ridge Preserve**.
- ❖ Renewed grazing leases for both October Farms at **Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve** and Tunitas Creek Ranch at **Tunitas Creek Preserve**, and repaired perimeter fencing on Tunitas Creek Ranch, supporting the District's conservation grazing program to maintain grassland habitat for native wildlife, reduce wildfire fuel loads, and help sustain local agriculture.

- ❖ Initiated the District's 1st Design-Build project to enhance and restore habitat for California red-legged frog and San Francisco garter snake at two Mindego Ranch ponds in ***Russian Ridge Preserve***.
- ❖ Completed brush management of the south pasture at Mindego Ranch in the ***Russian Ridge Preserve*** to preserve grasslands and expand the available cattle forage to support the District's conservation grazing program.
- ❖ Supported partner work to restore the stream corridor and enhance steelhead fish habitat below Stevens Creek Dam.

PUBLIC ACCESS, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

- ❖ Completed major actions to open the Mount Umunhum Summit at ***Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve*** for public access, including:
 - Constructed the Mount Umunhum Summit Project with a new 57-car parking lot, two summit shelters, an ADA drop-off area, ceremonial circle, ADA-accessible pathways, stairs, trail steps, vista points, benches, and other site amenities.
 - Enriched the visitor experience with interpretive displays of the site's natural, cultural, and military history.
 - Completed the Mount Umunhum Road Improvement Project, installing culverts and drainage improvements, guardrails and protective barriers, retaining walls, chip seal re-surfacing and striping, fencing, signage, and other road improvements for safe public vehicular passage to and from the summit area.
 - Constructed the award-winning Mount Umunhum Trail, with three new trail bridges, the Guadalupe Creek Overlook vista point, and interpretive signage.
 - Hosted approximately 1,180 guests at eight (8) separate events from September 9 to September 17 as part of the Grand Opening. These events included preview site tours to thank neighbors, partners, and stakeholders for their support, highlight the restoration progress and re-contouring of the mountaintop, inform the press of the site history and project work, and host a Native American ceremony at the summit to reconnect native people to the site of their origin. The large Public Grand Opening on September 17 received nearly 700 members of the public who arrived to the site via shuttle to enjoy the views and guided tours led by District volunteers and staff.
 - Facilitated extensive grand opening media coverage, which generated sixteen (16) print and online articles, seven (7) news segments, and two (2) radio stories.
 - Produced the "Stories of Mount Umunhum" free audio tour mobile device application, with over 1,800 downloads, offering the public a "virtual guided tour" of the summit.

- Assisted Plan M Productions in the creation of "Umunhum", a short documentary film highlighting the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band's return to the restored summit of Mount Umunhum.
 - Showcased a video of San Jose students learning hands-on science at the summit.
- ❖ Completed major actions to open lower ***La Honda Creek Preserve*** to the public, including:
- Hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to kick off construction at the new Sears Ranch Road parking area on August 1, 2017.
 - Constructed the new Sears Ranch parking area with 25 parking spaces, ADA-accessible amenities, new restroom, trailhead and interpretive signage, and fencing.
 - Completed six (6) miles of trail and road repairs, and installed signage and self-closing pasture gates to prepare the site for public use.
 - Demolished numerous dilapidated structures and removed old ranch debris to improve public safety.
 - Rebuilt the Harrington Bridge superstructure, adding new decking and railings for safe public, tenant, patrol, and maintenance passage over Harrington Creek.
 - Hosted a Grand Opening Celebration on November 30, 2017 with approximately 150 guests in attendance, including elected officials, partners, and neighbors.
 - Worked with six (6) media outlets who ran stories on the preserve opening with five (5) print and online articles and two (2) broadcast news segments.
 - Featured the newly opened La Honda Creek Preserve in a seven (7) minute segment on the NBC Bay Area television show "Open Road with Doug McConnell" on March 25, 2018 and April 29, 2018.
 - Co-Hosted San Francisco Chronicle Outdoors Writer Tom Stienstra and 30 members of the public on a hike in the preserve.
- ❖ Completed, commenced, or continued major actions toward opening ***Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve*** to the public in 2019, stewarding the natural resources, and improving site conditions, including:
- Completed the construction documents for the new Alma College parking area, pedestrian crossing, and trailhead.
 - Hosted a groundbreaking for the new parking lot on May 1, 2018 with 36 guests in attendance, including board, staff, partners, and media.
 - Worked with thirteen (13) media outlets who ran stories on the upcoming preserve opening, including five (5) print and online articles, and four (4) news segments.
 - Began construction of the new 53-car parking lot with a double pit toilet restroom, and 0.25-mile loop trail encircling Upper Lake on March 2018 to open the western area of the preserve to the public.

- Constructed two (2) new trail segments to complete the new west side trail loop, upgraded existing roads with drainage improvements, and began construction of a roadside retaining wall.
 - Began reconstruction of the Webb Creek Bridge in March 2018, a crucial stream crossing for public trail and emergency vehicle access that supports the 2019 grand opening.
 - Featured the preserve in a seven-minute segment on the NBC Bay Area television show "Open Road with Doug McConnell" on April 22, 2018.
 - Installed site safety and security fencing around the former Alma College site.
 - Conducted site feasibility studies, and code and regulatory research, to inform the development of concept plans, design alternatives, and cost estimates for site improvements to Bear Creek Stables.
 - Completed the design, permitting, and extension of a main water line and hose bib to provide water for ongoing preserve operations and construction projects, and serve as a future water system connection for Bear Creek Stables.
 - Completed Schematic Designs (30% Plans and Specifications) for the Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Project and began the permitting process with Santa Clara County.
 - Worked with consultants to develop a 60% plan set for the Mud Lake Drainage Improvement Project to improve storm water drainage in the preserve.
- ❖ Completed, commenced, or continued major actions to close a gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail at ***Ravenswood Open Space Preserve*** and assist the City of East Palo Alto in developing the adjacent Cooley Landing Park, including:
- Provided technical assistance to the City of East Palo Alto on the final design and bidding for Phases IV and V of the Cooley Landing Vision Plan, which the District will partially fund with a \$1.25M Measure AA contribution.
 - Completed the second year of plant restoration work with Grassroots Ecology.
 - Completed geotechnical investigations and developed a 65% plan set for upcoming construction of the 0.6-mile Ravenswood Bay Trail connection.
 - Submitted a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application to streamline the regulatory permitting process for construction of the Ravenswood Bay Trail Connection project..
- ❖ Completed public access projects and specific milestones in ***Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve***, including:
- Secured design and construction drawings of a new, two-stall restroom to replace the existing, deteriorated single stall restroom in the lower area of the preserve. Construction is scheduled for Fall 2018.

- Installed a new vehicle and trail bridge over Purisima Creek to maintain an important trail and road connection within the preserve.
- ❖ Completed public access projects and specific milestones in **Rancho San Antonio Preserve**, including:
 - Assessed the historic significance and structural integrity of the Deer Hollow Farm White Barn to inform the development of structural repair plans; developed partnership agreements with the City of Mountain View and Friends of Deer Hollow Farm to co-fund the repairs.
 - Met with Santa Clara County, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, and adjoining cities to identify potential parking and multi-modal access solutions to address the high parking demand.
 - Completed a Visitor Use Level Measurement Study to inform future planning and management actions.
- ❖ Completed multiple **District-Wide** actions in support of public access goals, including:
 - Cleared vegetation for fire safety and public access along roads and trails, and maintained defensible space around 40 District structures.
 - Cleared hundreds of downed trees and repaired numerous roads and trails.
 - Collected visitor use counts at various preserves to understand use patterns.
 - Regraded multiple roads and trails for improved drainage.
 - Hosted a series of 10 hikes for the public in partnership with Latino Outdoors at eight (8) different preserves, reaching 285 participants.
 - Explored opportunities with regional partners to expand trail connectivity on the Peninsula.
 - Surveyed over 1,400 visitor groups at 19 Open Space Preserves to gather information about visitor demographics and satisfaction; 98.5% of respondents ranked their quality of experience at District Preserve as either Good or Very Good.
 - Hosted a public open house in Half Moon Bay to review the San Mateo County Coastal Service Plan and projects completed to date and underway on the coast.
 - Hosted informational booths at 36 community outreach events throughout the District, providing information about District preserves and programs to the public.
 - Developed an internal customer contact tracking system to expedite responses to public questions and concerns.
 - Completed the Docent and Volunteer Programs Structure Study to identify recommendations for the future growth and development of each program for enhancing public programming, education, and stewardship opportunities.

- Advocated for the passage of key legislative actions: SB 492 (Beall) – Regulatory streamlining for the acquisition of San Jose Water Company (SJWC) watershed lands; SB 793 (Hill) – Design Build authority to add a new contracting mechanism for capital projects; SB 5 (de León) – \$4.1 billion Park Bond (Prop 68); and \$10 million budget request (Beall, Kalra) to assist with the acquisition of SJWC lands.
- Met with state legislators and their aides as part of an annual Legislative Delegation Visit in Sacramento to discuss key District projects and legislative items of interest.
- Sent out 18 press releases on District projects and activities resulting in dozens of stories in various local media outlets to continue informing the public of recent events.
- Developed an informational brochures to develop new partnerships and attract new grant funding sources.
- Expanded ongoing partnerships with local volunteer-based organizations, including the Student Conservation Association, Village Harvest, Grassroots Ecology, Morgan Autism Center, and Golden Hour to increase public participation in land stewardship activities.
- Trained 42 new Trail Patrol members who are now part of the District’s Volunteer Trail Patrol Program.
- Hosted the Annual Volunteer Recognition Event to honor and thank our Volunteers and Docents for their hard work in support of the District’s mission.
- Planned, scheduled and coordinated environmental education programming with Outdoor Education Leader Docents and local schools, including: 35 Spaces & Species field trips for 3rd-5th grades (approximately 750 students), and 6 Redwood Ecology & Climate Change high school field learning excursions (in partnership with Save the Redwoods League; approximately 120 students). An additional 1,200 students participated in field trips to Monte Bello, Los Trancos, and Windy Hill Preserves in partnership with Environmental Volunteers.
- Signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of California's statewide California Naturalist (CalNat) Program to certify Docents as California Naturalists as part of the District’s Outdoor Activity Docent training program. The mission of the CalNat Program is to foster a diverse community of naturalists and promote stewardship of California's natural resources through science education and service.
- Provided biennial 14-week training for 25 new Outdoor Activity Docent Naturalists who will lead guided hikes and rides for the public. The 2018 class is the first to become certified California Naturalists through UC California's program.
- Volunteer Outdoor Activity Docents provided over 270 guided interpretive activities for the public (approximately 2,400 participants) on District preserves.
- Co-hosted a screening of "The Cat that Changed America" with Peninsula Open Space Trust and Pathways for Wildlife along with a panel discussion on wildlife corridors

and the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing. The screening was a success with over 325 attendees.

- ❖ Demolished a seismically unsound structure adjacent to **El Sereno Preserve** and restored the site, creating a natural entrance to the preserve.
- ❖ Collaborated with partner agencies (Caltrans, Santa Clara County Parks, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Bay Area Ridge Trail) to identify opportunities for a public trail crossing at Highway 17 to close a major gap in the regional trail system; also ground-truthed multiple potential crossings and trail alignment options with Santa Clara County Parks.
- ❖ Began construction of Phase IV of the Oljon Trail at **El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve** after securing all necessary permits from San Mateo County. Work included road abandonment, bridge construction, puncheon installation, and road to trail conversion. The project will provide a new loop trail from the parking area and restore steep, eroded roads and trails.
- ❖ Hosted a beginners backpacking camping trip at Black Mountain Backpack Camp at **Monte Bello Preserve** in partnership with Latino Outdoors; 10 participants joined the camping trip, many of whom were first-time campers.
- ❖ Finalized a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Section 1602 permit and received City of Palo Alto building permits for the Stevens Creek Nature Trail Bridges project at **Monte Bello Preserve**; a biological consultant started botanical surveys to prepare for construction.
- ❖ Initiated early permitting discussions with the Town of Portola Valley for the potential reuse and rehabilitation of historic structures in the Hawthorns area of **Windy Hill Preserve** by a private operator as an independent living facility for adults with disabilities.
- ❖ Completed initial public access programming and feasibility assessments to inform an upcoming public planning process that will identify future public access opportunities and uses for the Hawthorn Property addition to **Windy Hill Preserve**.
- ❖ Finalized a Partnership Agreement with the City of Saratoga to provide funding assistance for the final design and environmental review of the planned Saratoga-to-the-Sea Trail.
- ❖ Completed an updated Road & Trail inventory for **Coal Creek Preserve**, and prepared a preliminary design memo for two large failures on Alpine Road Trail. After presenting options to the Board for repairs and improvements, the Board approved repairing failures to maintain the regional trail connection.
- ❖ Identified the preliminary trail alignment for the upcoming Phase II La Honda Creek Loop Trail at **La Honda Creek Preserve**.
- ❖ Completed historic and structural assessments of the La Honda Creek White Barn at **La Honda Creek Preserve** to inform future repair plans.
- ❖ Completed a site assessment, water well assessment, and geotechnical study to inform the replacement of Agriculture Workforce Housing at **La Honda Creek Preserve**.
- ❖ Hosted annual spring event with docent-led public tours of the historic "Woodhills" home in **Fremont Older Preserve** for 130 participants.

- ❖ Managed operation of and programming at the Daniels Nature Center in ***Skyline Ridge Preserve***, including coordination and scheduling of Nature Center Host docents; 2,000+ visitors were welcomed on weekends between April and November.

GENERAL/DISTRICT-WIDE SUPPORT OF MISSION

- ❖ Contracted with Santa Clara County Fire Safe to remove fire-prone eucalyptus trees and improve fire safety at ***Los Trancos Preserve***.
- ❖ Issued 2017 Green Bonds, refunding part of the 2012 Bonds, resulting in a savings of \$18.4 million; issued \$12.5 million of 2017 Parity Bonds to finance the new South Area Field Office and new Administrative Office; and issued 2018 Green Bonds, selling 34% of the new bonds at retail to fund Measure AA projects.
- ❖ Continued implementation of critical Financial and Operational Sustainability Model Study recommendations to enhance the District's delivery of Measure AA projects and fulfillment of its Vision Plan and Mission, including:
 - Fully implemented the two-unit special projects crew program and hired a Capital Projects Field Manager to oversee the program. The two special projects crews work on capital projects to improve public access and restore District preserves.
 - Implemented additional finance and human resources software enhancements and modules to improve business system functionality and support.
 - Held first internal Leadership Academy with 16 graduates to address internal succession planning needs.
 - Implemented a New Hire Onboarding Program to welcome new hires and introduce them for their new position, role, and organizational structure so they can quickly become productive and contributing members.
 - Finalized new and completed updates to numerous policies, including the Housing Program Policy.
- ❖ Held three Diversity Ad Hoc Committee meetings to implement the Board-approved Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- ❖ Finalized the Grantmaking Policy to support research on District preserves.
- ❖ Implemented the grants management database AmpliFund to keep track of all past and current grant sources.
- ❖ Participated in regional networks and relationship building with state agencies to maintain open lines of communication with grant funders for future grant funding opportunities.
- ❖ Completed a District-wide ADA self-assessment of policies, programs, and procedures to determine current levels of service and potential barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities to inform the development of a transition plan that identifies ADA-related improvements.

- ❖ Hosted an overview of the 2014 Open Space Vision Plan and Conservation Atlas on November 15, 2017 for the Board and public.
- ❖ Updated the Five-Year Measure AA (MAA) Projects list, which informed the development of Three-Year Capital Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Began repairs and replacement of water systems at Big Dipper Ranch, Stevens Canyon Ranch, Silva residence, and Toto Ranch.
- ❖ Completed repairs to 32 residences, some of which house rangers and maintenance staff who provide onsite, after-hours monitoring of the preserves.
- ❖ Purchased a corporation yard as the new South Area Field Office to house field-related operations for the District’s southern region. Completed a conditional use permit, environmental review, and space programming, and initiated preliminary design for reconfiguration and repairs to the new property.
- ❖ Entered into a purchase contract for a new Administration Office building to consolidate all administrative staff and functions. Completed a space needs and programming analysis, as well as building assessments for the new office space. Initiated the Request for Qualifications/Proposals process to hire an architectural firm to complete the design and repair plans for the new Administrative Office. Formed an Administrative Office Ad Hoc Board Committee to assist in the planning and design process.
- ❖ Completed the La Honda Creek Wildland Fire Response Plan that outlines key preserve features such as emergency access roads and water resources to assist fire suppression activities and guide the safe evacuation of visitors and residents. The Plan also identifies sensitive natural and cultural resources to protect from accidental damage.

AWARDS/GRANTS/RECOGNITION

- ❖ Completed successful grant applications totaling \$1,349,500; grants awarded include:
 - Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation Grant (\$750,000) for the Twin Creeks property purchase in the Loma Prieta area of ***Sierra Azul Preserve***.
 - County of Santa Clara grant (\$400,000) for construction of the Bay Trail Connection at ***Ravenswood Open Space Preserve***.
 - Santa Clara Valley Water District Grant (\$149,500) for the construction of Webb Creek Bridge at ***Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve***.
 - David and Lucile Packard Foundations grant (\$50,000) to support the search for a long-term operator at Cooley Landing at ***Ravenswood Open Space Preserve***.
- ❖ Received a National Recreational Trail designation for the Mt. Umunhum Trail by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, one of only 19 trails in 17 states, and the only one in California in 2017.
- ❖ Awarded the “Excellence in Design: Park Planning” by the California Parks and Recreation Society for the Mount Umunhum Summit Project.

- ❖ Received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the second time and the Operating Budget – Meritorious Award from California Society of Municipal Finance Officers for the first time.
- ❖ Received the Outstanding Financial Reporting Award from both the Government Finance Officers Association and the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers.
- ❖ Recognized for the “Best Overall Performance for Non-Municipal Agencies” as part of the 2018 Risk Management Awards by the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority, highlighting the District’s dedicated effort and achievement in risk management.