

## **La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan Workshop #1 Summary**

On November 3, 2004, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District held the first in series of three community workshops as part of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan. The Master Plan will define the long-term vision for the 2,042-acre Preserve, and will provide management guidelines for the Preserve's natural resources and facilities. Workshop notices were sent to over 1,300 area residents and property owners and over 50 local organizations.

Approximately 45 people attended Workshop #1. The purpose of the workshop was to provide an introduction to the Preserve, and to receive input from the community members regarding their vision for the future of the Preserve. The workshop began with roll call and an introduction by Deane Little, Chair of the MROSD Use and Management Committee. Next, Matt Freeman of the MROSD explained the District's mission and its goals in developing a Master Plan for the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. Mr. Freeman stressed the importance of receiving input from the community in developing the Master Plan. He introduced the lead consultant for the planning process, David Early of Design, Community & Environment, who gave a brief overview of the Master Plan process and reviewed the evening's agenda.

Mr. Freeman then presented a summary of existing conditions at the Preserve, including images and descriptions of the Preserve's location, geography, biological resources and existing facilities. Mr. Early, the consultant, then presented key issues to be considered in the master planning process. These issues included: trail layout and use, connections to surrounding properties, staging areas and access, watershed protection, special-status species, exotic and invasive species, grazing and the use and preservation of potentially historic resources. Mr. Early then asked participants to respond to the key issues and suggest additional issues they felt the Master Plan should consider. Participants suggested the following additions to the list of issues:

- ◆ Dogs
- ◆ Horses and horse trailer parking
- ◆ Cooperation with surrounding property owners
- ◆ Addition of new land (Driscoll Ranch?)
- ◆ Respect for private property
- ◆ Fire protection

Following the presentation, participants broke up into five small groups to identify additional master plan issues and discuss their visions for the future of the Preserve. Each group was led by a trained facilitator from the consultant team or the District, and all group comments were recorded on large sheets of paper. After 45 minutes of small group discussion, participants reconvened as a large group and heard five "reports back" by one spokesperson selected from each group.

## Small Group Results

All groups expressed a desire for trails to accommodate a variety of users, and that efforts should be made to manage conflicts regarding trail use. Suggestions for managing multiple uses included alternate days for different uses and developing different trails for different uses. Several groups specifically mentioned the desire to create a north-south connection with trails on the Preserve. Most groups supported equestrian access, and a few groups mentioned their support of bike access. One group did not support bike access to the Preserve. Although most groups recognized the need for multiple access points and staging areas, they also expressed a high level of concern about the safety of providing access along Highway 84. Four of the five groups expressed the need to respect private property near the Preserve, and some suggested that trails be located away from neighboring private properties. Several groups mentioned a desire to create connections to adjacent parks and public properties, such as Pescadero Park, El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve and Driscoll Ranch.

All groups expressed their support for grazing at the Preserve, provided it is carefully managed. All groups also expressed a desire to make the Preserve's facilities available for public use. The most common suggested uses were an environmental education center at the Log Cabin, and an equestrian center or a location for community events at the Red Barn and adjacent corrals. Two groups suggested the possible use of the corrals by local 4-H groups. Other uses suggested by a smaller number of groups included a youth hostel or hiker's hut.

In regard to natural resources, all groups expressed a desire for careful land management in order to protect sensitive resources. Specifically, several groups mentioned the need to protect riparian areas, the need to manage fire fuel and the need to control invasive species. Other suggestions included minimizing stream crossings and enhancing the existing fisheries.

Following the reports back from the small group spokespeople, Mr. Early summarized the small group feedback and announced a walking tour of the Preserve on Saturday November 20, 2004 at 10 a.m. Interested parties should contact Matt Freeman at (650) 691-1200. Mr. Early also announced Workshop #2, which will focus on alternatives development and will be held on December 6, 2004 at the La Honda Elementary School. At Workshop #2, additional information on opportunities and constraints will be presented, and participants will again have the opportunity to work in small groups, this time focusing on developing alternatives for the Master Plan.