

# A GUIDE FOR OUR OPEN SPACE NEIGHBORS



MIDPENINSULA  
REGIONAL  
OPEN SPACE  
DISTRICT



*Stephen E. Abbors,  
General Manager*

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### ***Mission of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District:***

*“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 and education.”*

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Open space lands offer a respite from the hectic pace of everyday life, literally “room to breathe.” These lands are an oasis of nature and fresh air adjacent to the urban areas, and provide an opportunity to experience and learn about the diverse natural environment that contributes so much to our quality of life in the Bay Area. These open space lands are accessible, at no cost, to anyone who wants to enjoy them; however, a few people have especially close ties to the land: our neighbors. Here at the District we have a special relationship with our neighbors not only because our lands are a part of their landscape, but also because there are struggles that we face together and that we can only solve through mutual support and cooperation. The fight against invasive, non-native grasses, for example, requires us to cooperate because “invasives” don’t recognize property boundaries. At the same time, the District desires to ensure that the privacy of our neighbors remains unaffected and respected by members of the public who visit the open space preserves to reconnect with nature and enjoy the benefits of the open spaces. The District hopes to foster a spirit of cooperation between its constituents and neighbors and this brochure provides information on how we fulfill our commitment in the communities we serve.

Stephen E. Abbors,  
General Manager

DISTRICT MAP . . . . . iii

BOARD OF DIRECTORS . . . . . 1

    BOARD MEETINGS & INTERESTED PARTIES

    LIST NOTIFICATION . . . . . 1

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 2

CONTACT INFORMATION . . . . . 3

    EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION . . . . . 4

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES . . . . . 5

FIRE . . . . . 6

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT . . . . . 7

ENCROACHMENTS . . . . . 8

TRESPASSING . . . . . 8

SIGNAGE . . . . . 8

STAFF . . . . . 9

DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART . . . . . 12

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS . . . . . 14

GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY INTRODUCTION . . . . . 16

SECTION 1: GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY . . . . . 17

SECTION 2: LAND PURCHASE, PLANNING, AND MANAGEMENT. . 24

SECTION 3: PUBLIC INFORMATION, EDUCATION,  
    AND OUTREACH. . . . . 25

OTHER RELEVANT DISTRICT POLICIES . . . . . 25

FOOTNOTES . . . . . 27

LEGAL NOTE . . . . . 27

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.

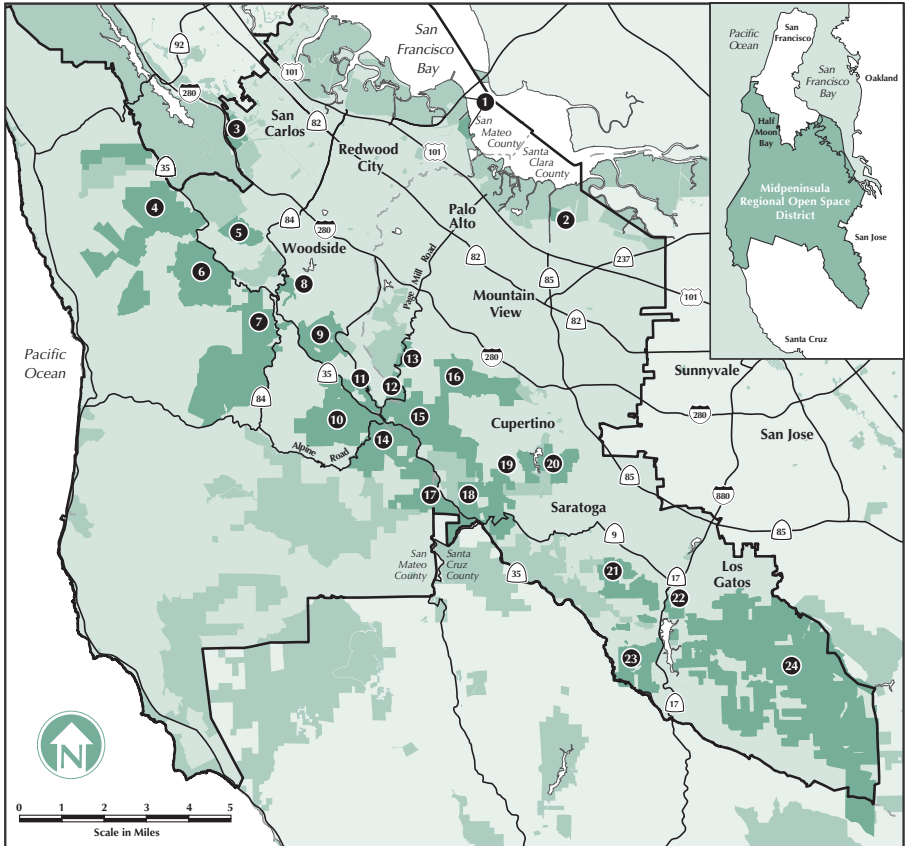
PHONE: 650-691-1200

EMAIL: [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org)

Web site: [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)

Twitter: @mrosd

# DISTRICT MAP



Preserves	#	Acres						
Bear Creek Redwoods	23	1,346	●	●	●	□	■	
Coal Creek	11	507	●	●	●	□	■	
El Corte de Madera Creek	6	2,817	●	●	●	□	■	
El Sereno	21	1,415	●	●	●	□	■	
Foothills	13	212	●	●	●	□	■	
Fremont Older	20	739	●	●	●	□	■	
La Honda Creek	7	5,760	●	●	●	□	■	
Long Ridge	17	2,035	●	●	●	□	■	
Los Trancos	12	274	●	●	●	□	■	
Monte Bello	15	3,190	●	●	●	□	■	
Picchetti Ranch	19	308	●	●	●	□	■	
Pulgas Ridge	3	366	●	●	●	□	■	
Purisima Creek Redwoods	4	4,071	●	●	●	□	■	
Rancho San Antonio	16	3,861	●	●	●	□	■	

- Ample Parking
- Limited Parking
- Very Limited Parking
- ④ Corresponds to preserve/π on map
- 1 In designated area by permit only
- 2 Kennedy-Limekiln area only
- 3 Mt. Umunhum area only
- 4 On designated trails only
- 5 On weekends, arrive early to find parking
- 6 Overlook Trail parking area by permit only

Preserves	#	Acres						
Ravenswood	1	373	●	●	●	□	■	
Russian Ridge	10	3,026	●	●	●	□	■	
Saratoga Gap	18	1,542	●	●	●	□	■	
Sierra Azul (Cathedral Oaks, Kennedy-Limekiln, Rancho de Guadalupe, & Mt. Umunhum Areas)	24	17,999	●	●	●	□	■	
Skyline Ridge	14	2,143	●	●	●	□	■	
St. Joseph's Hill	22	270	●	●	●	□	■	
Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area	2	55	●	●	●	□	■	
Teague Hill	5	626	●	●	●	□	■	
Thornewood	8	167	●	●	●	□	■	
Windy Hill	9	1,335	●	●	●	□	■	

- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District preserves
- Major city, county, state & federal parks, open space preserves, and publicly-owned watershed

\*Map and related information as of 2-2010.

The District is divided into seven geographic wards of approximately equal populations, each represented for a four-year term by an elected Board member. Below are the current Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board members and their email addresses if you wish to contact them.

### BOARD MEMBERS

Ward 1: **Pete Siemens** • [psiemens@openspace.org](mailto:psiemens@openspace.org)  
Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga

Ward 2: **Mary C. Davey** • [mdavey@openspace.org](mailto:mdavey@openspace.org)  
Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Palo Alto, Stanford, Sunnyvale

Ward 3: **J. Edmond (Jed) Cyr** • [jcyr@openspace.org](mailto:jcyr@openspace.org)  
Sunnyvale

Ward 4: **Curt Riffle** • [criffle@openspace.org](mailto:criffle@openspace.org)  
Los Altos, Mountain View

Ward 5: **Nonette G. Hanko** • [nhanko@openspace.org](mailto:nhanko@openspace.org)  
East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Stanford

Ward 6: **Larry Hassett** • [lhassett@openspace.org](mailto:lhassett@openspace.org)  
Atherton, La Honda, Loma Mar, Menlo Park, Pescadero, Portola Valley, Redwood City, San Gregorio, Woodside

Ward 7: **Cecily Harris** • [charris@openspace.org](mailto:charris@openspace.org)  
El Granada, Half Moon Bay, Montara, Moss Beach, Princeton, Redwood City, San Carlos, Woodside

### BOARD MEETINGS & INTERESTED PARTIES LIST NOTIFICATION

The Board generally holds public meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the District office: 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA, 94022.

Public outreach and involvement in the District's decision making process is a cornerstone of the Good Neighbor Policy. The public is invited and encouraged to attend the Board meetings, and to participate in the decision-making process. In addition, special public hearings and neighborhood meetings are held periodically on specific issues. Citizen participation is an essential part of the planning process for the development and use of the District's open space preserves.

Neighbors to the preserves are always informed of any activity that could result in a change in the use and management of the preserve, such as the Board of Directors' consideration of a trail construction project or a new land purchase. This notice is typically in the form of an official Board Meeting Agenda, or an invitation to a public workshop. In addition, the District maintains an Interested Parties Database so everyone has the opportunity to receive notice of public meetings related to a specific preserve or a more general topic of interest, such as resource management, grazing, user group access, and many other issues.

Persons interested in receiving notification about public meetings related to a specific preserve or a more general topic are encouraged to contact the District.

If you wish to have a hard copy of the Board Meeting Agenda mailed to you prior to the meeting, you may request this service by calling the District Clerk. This service costs \$25 annually. Agendas and meeting information is also available on the District Web site [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org).

## INTRODUCTION

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### *Coastside Protection Program 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.”*

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This brochure was designed to be a reference guide for neighbors and anyone interested in working with and learning more about the District. To that end, you’ll find contact information for the Board of Directors and District staff, and learn how to quickly contact someone in an emergency.

In addition, this booklet is intended to be a practical “how-to” guide for working with the District. From a description of our volunteer and docent programs to learning how District rangers patrol and field staff protect the land, we hope this brochure will be informative and will make it easier for you to participate in District activities.

In the back of this brochure, on page 16, we’ve printed the recently updated Good Neighbor Policy along with guidelines demonstrating how the District is committed to implementing the Policy, and building and maintaining good relationships with all of its neighbors.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions you may have.

**OFFICE HOURS:**

You are always welcome to stop by the District office to pick up trail brochures, volunteer information, meeting agendas, and other available information. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

**ADDRESS:**

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, California 94022-1404

Phone: 650-691-1200

Fax: 650-691-0485

E-mail: [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org)

Web site: [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)

Twitter: @mrosd

**DIRECTIONS:**

From Highway 101 in Mountain View, take the Rengstorff Avenue exit. Drive southwest on Rengstorff Avenue for approximately 2 miles. Turn right at El Camino Real. Turn left on Distel Circle. (Look for the Carl's Jr. restaurant at the corner of El Camino and Distel Circle. There is no traffic signal at the intersection.) The District office is the second building on the right.

From 1-280 in Los Altos, take the El Monte Avenue exit. Drive northeast on El Monte Avenue for approximately 2.5 miles. Turn left on El Camino Real and drive half a mile. Turn left on Distel Circle. (Look for the Carl's Jr. restaurant at the corner of El Camino and Distel Circle. There is no traffic signal at the intersection.) The District office is the second building on the right.

**DISTRICT STAFF:**

You may contact the District's general manager, department managers, or staff by calling our administrative office at 650-691-1200 or by email at [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org).

**For questions regarding:**

- Fire hazard prevention, including vegetation management, information regarding fire-safe practices, fallen or potentially hazardous trees, etc.), and conflicts between neighbors and preserve visitors (trespass, parking, noise, etc.)—direct your inquiry to the operations manager.
- The use and management planning of the preserves—direct your inquiry to the planning manager.
- Resource Management (weed abatement, feral animal control, restoration and re-vegetation, etc.)—direct your inquiry to the senior resource management specialist in the operations department.

## OMBUDSPERSON:

Neighbors may contact the District's ombudsperson who is an appointee of the Board of Directors. The ombudsperson follows up on resident and neighbor inquiries or complaints to attempt to resolve misunderstandings or conflicts that have not been resolved satisfactorily by District staff. The ombudsperson works independently and objectively to assist in maintaining open communication and positive relations with District residents and neighbors.

Contact Information:

Carol L. Joyce, Ombudsperson

Cell phone: 650-219-5664

The ombudsperson can be contacted by email through the District Web site.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

To report an emergency on District lands, neighbors and/or visitors should **call 911** for local emergency services or call **650-968-4411**.\*

\*This is the 24-hour dispatch number for District rangers. Call this number to report:

- A medical, police, fire or other emergency
- Suspicious activity or crime
- A missing person
- Any urgent situation for which you need immediate assistance

Please have the name of the preserve and your location (for example, the trail you are on, or if you're in the parking lot) available to assist the dispatcher in sending the appropriate resources to you.

To report maintenance needs, or for routine questions or information, call the District's administrative office at 650-691-1200. This number is answered during regular business hours, and voice mail is available outside of regular hours. E-mail can also be sent to [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org).

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY**

SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

[www.sccgov.org](http://www.sccgov.org)

1-800-800-1793\*

408-378-4010\*

[www.sccfd.org](http://www.sccfd.org)

SANTA CLARA COUNTY PARKS

408-355-2200

[www.parkhere.org](http://www.parkhere.org)

SANTA CLARA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

408-808-4900\*

[www.sccsheriff.org/portal/site/sheriff](http://www.sccsheriff.org/portal/site/sheriff)

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
SELECT EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
FOR INFORMATION ON FIRE PARTNERS.

831-454-2000

[www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/)

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS

831-454-7901

[www.scparks.com](http://www.scparks.com)

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

831-471-1121\*

[www.scsheriff.com](http://www.scsheriff.com)

**SAN MATEO COUNTY**

SAN MATEO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
GO TO DEPARTMENTS LINK FOR INFORMATION  
ON FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES OR IN THE  
SEARCH BOX ENTER FIRE PREVENTION AND  
RESPONSE TO FIND ADDITIONAL LINKS.

650-363-4000

[www.co.sanmateo.ca.us](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us)

[www.co.sanmateo.ca.us](http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us)

SAN MATEO COUNTY PARKS

650-363-4020

[www.eparks.net](http://www.eparks.net)

SAN MATEO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

650-363-4911\*

[www.smcsheriff.com](http://www.smcsheriff.com)

CALFIRE

[www.fire.ca.gov/](http://www.fire.ca.gov/)

THE FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

[www.firesafecouncil.org/](http://www.firesafecouncil.org/)

**EMERGENCIES**

Dial 911

\*Non-emergency number

\*\*Information as of 2-2010.

## FIRE ON DISTRICT LANDS

Wildland fire is a natural and necessary part of California ecosystems. However, protection of life and property will always be the first priority in the District's wildland fire management policy.



The District works cooperatively with local fire agencies to provide training opportunities by allowing prescribed burns to be conducted by the fire agencies on District lands. These burns provide invaluable training for both District staff and local firefighters.

Prescribed burns are also used by the District to manage vegetation and ecosystems and reduce the threat of

wildfire. Prescribed burns help to remove non-native vegetation and encourage the growth of native grasses and wildflowers.

The District maintains an active wildland fire response program, and works and trains in cooperation with local fire agencies. District patrol staff, and most maintenance staff, are active members of the wildland fire program. The District maintains a fleet of trucks equipped with water and fire retardant foam that provide an important first response capability for wildland firefighting during fire season.

District ordinances forbid campfires and smoking on District lands, and District staff actively enforce these ordinances to prevent these fire risk activities.

## FIRE SAFETY

If you are worried about wildfire threat to your home, check with your county, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE), or with the local Fire Safe Council for recommendations to create an effective defensible space.

Defensible space is the area between a house and wildland vegetation, where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the threat of a potential wildland fire and to provide fire fighters safe areas to work in to protect your home and property. "Defensible space is sensible space." Eliminating fire dangers around your home is the first step in making your family and community safer from wildfires. Recommendations from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for defensible space guidelines include:

- Create a 100-foot clearance from your home
- The first 30 feet is the "lean, clean, and green zone where vegetation is well pruned and maintained."

- The remaining 70 feet is a reduced fuel zone where “ladder fuels” are removed and horizontal spacing is created between plants to prevent fire from spreading.
- Trim trees at least 15 feet from power lines
- Trim trees at least 10 feet from your chimney

Be aware of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) in your area as you consider removal of dry and dead vegetation. SOD is a forest disease that is killing oaks and infecting other plants in California. The SOD pathogen called *Phytophthora ramorum* most often kills tanoak and coast live oak trees and can spread to many other plants common in oak forests. For more information, visit the Web site [www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org).

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The primary intent of resource management at the District is to protect, maintain, or restore resources and sustain them in perpetuity. This is also called “stewardship.” The District conserves habitat for rare species, controls plants and animals that are generally not native to this area and are destructive in the natural environment, and restores disturbed areas to natural conditions. Using a watershed approach, staff works to identify, protect, and restore local rare species, especially those associated with mature forests, streams, and ponds. The destructive disturbance of sensitive grasslands and wetlands by the rooting behavior of feral pigs is managed with a trapping program. Integrated pest management techniques are used to control non-native, invasive plants such as yellow starthistle, French broom, and pampas grass in priority areas. Typical ecological restoration projects include the management of former logging and ranching roads to reduce or eliminate soil erosion. The District is interested in coordinating restoration and invasive species control programs across property lines and is available to meet with neighbors to talk about possible joint projects.

### GRAZING MANAGEMENT

The District uses livestock grazing that is compatible with public access to maintain and enhance the diversity of native plant and animal communities, manage vegetation fuels for fire protection, help sustain the local agricultural economy, and preserve and foster appreciation for the region’s rural agricultural heritage.



## ENCROACHMENTS

Part of the District's mission of preserving the natural and unspoiled character of the public's open space lands involves protecting these landscapes from unauthorized construction, landscaping, grading or other activities that damage our natural resources and diminish the scenic and recreational experience for everyone. With natural landscapes bordering urban and rural communities throughout the midpeninsula region, the District must remain vigilant in safeguarding its system of open space preserves from illegal encroachment. Neighbors and users of District preserves are encouraged to contact the District to report potential encroachments or to discuss the possibility of an allowable use by permit.

## TRESPASSING

While the District is strongly committed to no-cost public access to District lands where appropriate and safe, the desire of neighbors to be free of trespass and impact from District visitors and activities is also very important.

The District works hard to educate the visiting public about trail etiquette, which includes staying on District lands and trails. There is an active program of signing the boundaries of District lands to inform the public when they have reached a preserve boundary. District staff also work with neighbors and local law enforcement agencies when a trespass issue is identified.

An active program also exists to ensure District lands, which are held in public trust, are free from encroachment and illegal access. The District employs a full-time encroachment/real property specialist who works with field staff and the District's legal department to ensure encroachments and other intrusions onto District lands are actively addressed, including prosecution where necessary.

## SIGNAGE

### PURPOSE OF SIGNS

The District employs a wide variety of signs to help inform visitors about the open space preserves, their natural and cultural resources, and the District's trail use regulations. **Trail directional signs** are installed at trailheads and at each trail junction to help visitors navigate the trails and safely reach their destination. **Regulatory signs** are located at each preserve entrance to inform visitors about appropriate trail uses and prohibited activities (such as smoking or use of motorized vehicles). **Preserve boundary signs** are used to identify adjacent private property in order to discourage inadvertent trespass by the public. Finally, the District develops **interpretive signs** and displays to educate visitors about features that are distinctive to the preserves to foster an appreciation of their unique natural or cultural heritage.

District staff consists of over 100 employees in five departments: operations, planning, public affairs, real property, and administration. It takes many people in a number of different positions to provide the opportunities and services visitors enjoy in the open space preserves, and each position has a direct impact on how the District serves the public. Reference the District Organizational Chart on pages 12 and 13.

## OPERATIONS

### OPERATIONS ADMINISTRATION

Operations administration develops operations policies and is responsible for resource management. This group makes sure field staff has the equipment needed to take care of District lands, and ensure visitor protection and safety.

### ROLE OF DISTRICT FIELD STAFF

The District field staff currently work from two field offices. The Foothills Field Office is located in Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, and the Skyline Field Office is located near the intersection of Page Mill Road and Skyline Boulevard in Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve.

Each field office is led by an Area Superintendent and has a staff of approximately 25 District employees. Their duties are divided between maintenance and patrol functions and both groups are actively involved with the District's volunteer programs.



Stretcher Smith

### PATROL

Patrol staff provides visitor information, resource protection, public safety, and routine maintenance. Rangers interact directly with open space preserve visitors, answering questions, providing directions, interpreting nature, enforcing regulations, responding to emergencies, and making sure signs, trail maps, and other information are available to the public at the preserves.

### MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

Maintenance and construction staff build and maintain District trails, staging areas, fire roads, bridges, fences, and other projects. Among other duties, maintenance and construction staff make sure trails drain properly during winter rains, poison oak does not overly encroach a trail, and pit toilets are clean and well-stocked for public use.

## MAINTENANCE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The maintenance and resource management function is distinct from maintenance and construction in that their focus is to provide greater field support for the resource management program and related projects, such as vegetation management and site restoration.

## PLANNING

The planning department is responsible for formulating plans and policies for the management and development of open space preserves; conducting resource inventories and other scientific study of the District's lands; preparing environmental restoration, habitat enhancement, and resource management plans; developing and maintaining the District's Geographic Information System (GIS); and ensuring continued compliance with environmental regulations.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Public Affairs staff gets the word out about the District to the public and the media, other organizations, and elected officials. The department coordinates the publishing of all the District's trail maps, newsletters, and other written materials, implements special events, works on legislation for the District, and offers community volunteer and environmental education programs.

## REAL PROPERTY

This program is responsible for purchasing land, as well as managing property the District rents or leases for special uses, such as agriculture and housing. In addition, this department works cooperatively with preserve neighbors, encouraging open communication and an exchange of ideas, to protect the public lands through programs such as easement monitoring.

## ADMINISTRATION

Administration supports all of the other District departments and the District's elected Board of Directors, including preparation for twice monthly Board meetings and related committee meetings. It also encompasses legal services, financial management, human resources, and information systems.



Karl Cohl



Deane Little



Frank Crossman

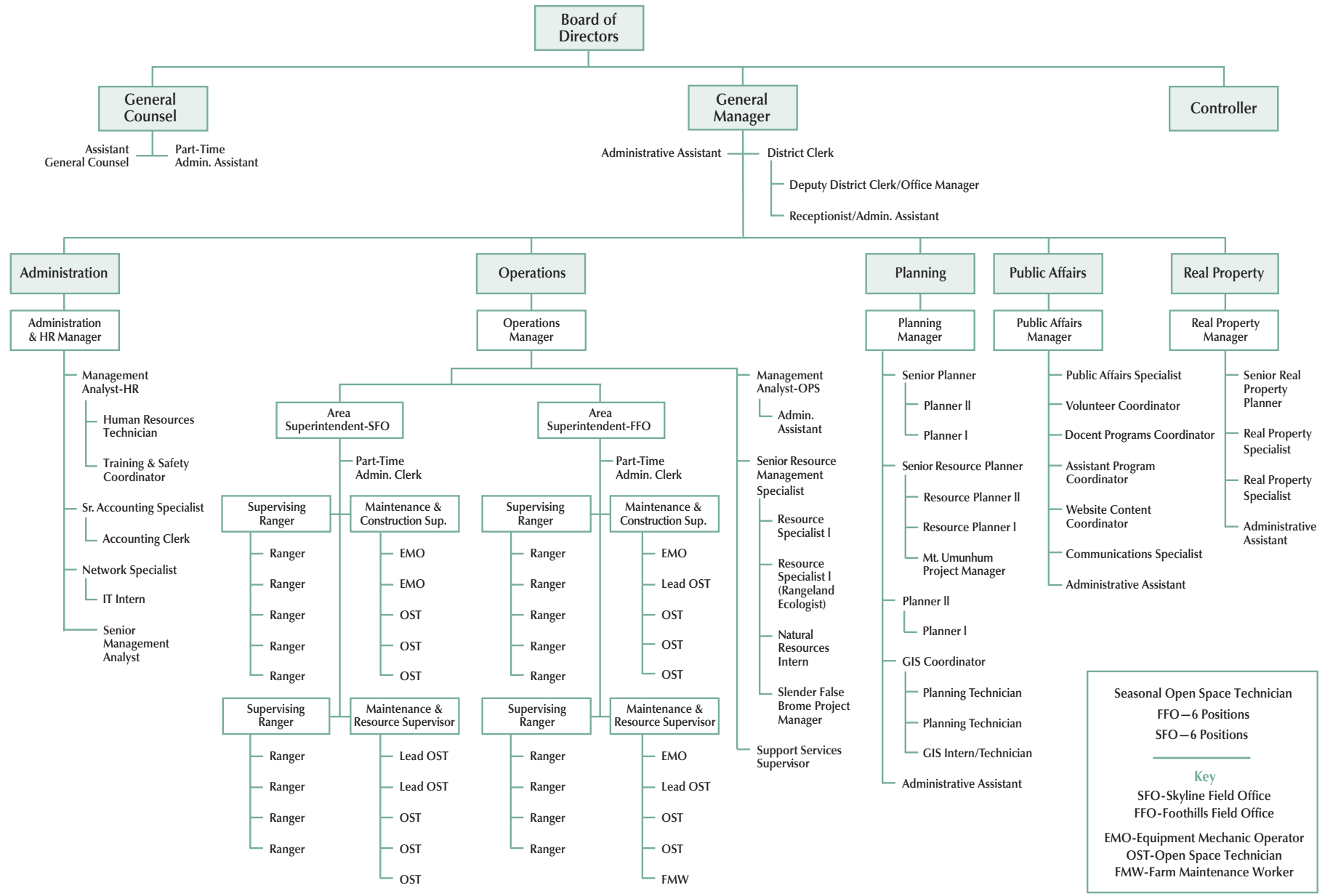


Deane Little



*From top left clockwise: Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve; Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve; La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve; David C. Daniels Nature Center, Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve; Monte Bello Open Space Preserve; and Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve.*

# MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT



\*District organizational chart as of 2-2010.

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The goal of the volunteer and docent programs is to encourage active public participation in the maintenance, restoration, and protection of the District's natural resources, and provide cultural, historical, and environmental education opportunities to the public. District docents and volunteers play a very important role in this key component of the District's mission by giving their time, energy, and expertise to educate and inspire visitors, protect and restore critical natural resources, and help conserve open space for the future.

Each year, more than 500 volunteers donate over 16,000 hours of service. These dedicated volunteers have a strong commitment to the District's mission, and the District provides involvement opportunities, thorough training, and quality programs. Depending on the program focus, volunteers receive training in District history, natural communities, cultural history, communication, resource management goals, safety, and tool maintenance.

### DOCENT PROGRAM



Karl Gohl

The Docent Program provides three main opportunities for those who wish to volunteer: Outdoor Activity Docents, Outdoor Education Leaders, and Nature Center Hosts.

**Outdoor Activity Docents** create and lead activities and interpretive programs, such as hikes, mountain bike excursions, and horse-back rides, for the public on open space preserves. The activities are advertised in the

District's quarterly publication, "Outdoor Activities;" all of the activities are offered free of charge.

*Spaces and Species: Exploring Natural Communities*, led by **Outdoor Education Leaders**, is an innovative environmental science education program offered at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve and the David C. Daniels Nature Center. In this unique setting, children have the opportunity to focus on the connections between themselves and their natural world, and begin to understand the importance and benefit of open space in their community. This program is offered free of charge to 3<sup>rd</sup>- through 5<sup>th</sup>- grade students during fall and spring.

**Nature Center Hosts** staff the David C. Daniels Nature Center at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve. Nature Center Hosts introduce visitors to the District, share natural history information, and offer discussions about points of interest at the Nature Center or engage people interested in the exhibits. The Nature Center is open to the public free of charge; open hours are on Saturdays and Sundays generally from 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm, April through mid-October (11:00 am – 4:00 pm late October through mid-November).

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Volunteer Program includes eight program areas; the outdoor service programs are highlighted below.

**Trail Patrol** members (which include equestrians, bicyclists, hikers, runners, and companion dog patrollers) talk with preserve visitors about trail safety and etiquette, provide information, and monitor and report trail conditions to District staff. There are approximately 120 trail patrol volunteers, who are required to patrol an average of four hours per month. These volunteers spent 6,550 hours patrolling District trails in 2009.

**Preserve Partners** participate in trail maintenance and construction, tree planting, cleanup projects, and other resource management activities. Tools and instruction are provided, and volunteers in this program can participate just once or as many times as meets an individual's schedule.

The **Advanced Resource Management Squad** is the newest volunteer program, established in 2007. Volunteers in this program work independently on projects that have a direct impact on the protection, management, and restoration of the complex ecosystems of the open space preserves.



Steve Mather

## GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY INTRODUCTION

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is committed to building and maintaining good relationships with all its neighbors<sup>1</sup>. To demonstrate this commitment, the District's Board of Directors adopted a Good Neighbor Policy in 1988. Since the last revision to the District's Good Neighbor Policy in 1996, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) approved the District's Coastside Protection Program in 2004, including the Coastside Protection Area<sup>2</sup> as part of the District's boundary. In conjunction with LAFCo's approval, the Board of Directors adopted a Service Plan<sup>3</sup>, which outlines the preservation and management services that will be provided by the District in the Coastside Protection Area. The Plan will be implemented using existing District funds. San Mateo County coastsiders do not pay taxes to the District.

A specific condition of the LAFCo-approved Service Plan required the District to amend its Good Neighbor Policy and you can find the result on the following pages. In Section 1, each of the 13 Service Plan and LAFCo provisions (shown in *italics* inside the green box) includes an implementation guideline, which describes how the District will carry out each provision and which in some cases supplements the provision. (While the Good Neighbor Policy provisions apply District-wide, some provisions were designated by LAFCo to apply to the coastside only. Where this is the case, the term "Coastside Protection Area only" has been added to the relevant implementation guideline). In addition, Sections 2 and 3 of this Policy have a number of provisions that are based on input given to the District by neighbors during a series of public meetings throughout the District.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Good Neighbor Policy is to establish guidelines and principles for ensuring good relationships between the District and its neighbors. In both the day-to-day conduct and in the long-range planning for public open space preserves, the District will make every effort to cooperate with neighbors, take into account their perspectives, address their concerns, and engage and involve them in the process of making decisions regarding the public preserves.

\* Footnotes are referenced on page 27.

## SECTION 1: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND PRIVACY

Many of the provisions in this section discuss public participation and notification and explain how the District will provide opportunities for neighbors to participate in decisions which may affect neighboring private lands and how the District will seek to notify them of these opportunities. To the District, being a good neighbor is a public-private partnership.

### POLICY PROVISION 1

*The District shall institute appropriate forms of representation so that the District planning and decision-making relating to the Coastside Protection Area includes the input of Coastside residents.*

### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 1

The District's Board of Directors voted on November 9, 2004 to approve a final redistricting plan and expand District Wards 6 and 7 to represent about 30,000 constituents in the Coastside Protection Area. In addition, the Board will publicly review District Ward boundaries after each official United States census and redistrict as necessary.

### POLICY PROVISION 2

*The District shall establish advisory committees, task forces or work groups as needed to develop or review specific policies or plans.*

### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 2

When planning for large-scale or complex projects public input is particularly valuable. Advisory committees, task forces or work groups can help assist the District in developing specific policies or plans. The Board will take the lead in creating these groups and welcomes suggestions by the community on when and how to best form them. Workshops with neighbors and the general public are a good way to discuss items of a controversial nature or significant changes in land-use or planning.

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The Coastside Protection Area covers the San Mateo County coast from south of the City of Pacifica to the Santa Cruz County line.

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### POLICY PROVISION 3

(Coastside Protection Area only)

*To ensure that local viewpoints are considered in all significant District planning and decision-making relating to the Coastside Protection Area, the District shall consult with local elected officials, government agencies, and government-sponsored organizations within the Coastside Protection Area, including but not limited to the Midcoast Community Council, Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council, Half Moon Bay City Council, and their elected bodies.*

### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 3

The District will establish a database of elected officials, government agencies, and government-sponsored organizations it will consult with on all significant planning and decision-making. Such consultations may occur through written questionnaires or requests for comments.

### POLICY PROVISION 4

*To further ensure recommendations representing local involvement are considered in District planning and decision-making relating to the Coastside Protection Area, the District shall directly notify community-interest groups, non-profit land trusts, elected officials, and other interested organizations about District Board meetings or other public meetings that involve subjects relating to the District's activities within the Coastside Protection Area.*

### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 4

Participation by local citizens is of critical importance to the District. Therefore, the District will encourage citizen involvement by notifying neighboring property owners, neighborhood organizations and interested individuals of upcoming Board meetings, special meetings, or workshops as established in the District's Public Notification Policy. The District shall also use other methods of notification to provide opportunities for public input such as announcements required by law, press releases, the District's Web site, e-mail, local newspapers, local bulletin boards, articles, print ads, and special mailings to interested individuals. Efforts will be made to notify the public a minimum of one week in advance of a public meeting. For single-subject

meetings of the full Board of Directors, or for meetings of standing Board committees for which the agendas are set well in advance, notices will be sent out to the public at least two weeks before the meetings, if possible.

### POLICY PROVISION 5

*In addition to adopted and legally required noticing, the District shall notify owners of contiguous properties about public meetings where property acquisitions in the Coastsides Protection Area or any significant use or improvements proposed on District-owned lands in the Coastsides Protection Area are considered.*

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*The Coastsides Protection Program's goal is to protect 11,800 acres of the coastsides as open space and agricultural land over the next 15 years.*

*\* The 15-year period extends from 2004-2019.*

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### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 5

For meetings where land purchases or land management agreements are being considered, the District will notify owners of adjacent properties and other affected neighbors in the vicinity (e.g. within the watershed or road corridor) of a proposed purchase or agreement.

The District will also notify owners of adjacent properties and other affected neighbors in the vicinity (e.g. within the watershed or road corridor) of District preserves when significant changes in use or improvements—those that have a potentially major effect on the area—are proposed on District-owned lands.

### POLICY PROVISION 6

*Because each land use management plan, policy update, acquisition project, and significant capital improvement project is subject to full review by the District Board (page 23 of Service Plan), meetings of the District Board and/or subcommittees on such matters concerning Coastsides Protection Area territory shall be held in the Coastsides Protection Area.*

### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 6

The Board of Directors and/or Board committees will hold public meetings in the affected area of the District when they consider master plans and/or significant policies—which are those policies that could have a major or important effect on the area.

## POLICY PROVISION 7

*The District shall provide private property signs where appropriate and provide trail users information regarding private property boundaries and to prohibit trespass to minimize public/private use conflicts and trespassing. The District shall clearly sign trails adjacent to active agriculture and provide trail users with information regarding property boundaries to minimize trespassing and conflicts with agricultural users.*

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 7

The District will install private property signs, where appropriate, and provide trail users with preserve maps and other information to help identify private property boundaries and help protect the privacy of District neighbors. To further inform trail users, where appropriate, the District will also post signs along trails adjacent to active agricultural land.

## POLICY PROVISION 8

*The following measures will be included in every future Use and Management Plan for parcels within the Coastside Protection Area:*

- a. In areas where trail routes are immediately adjacent to private property, fencing shall be employed as necessary to deter users from leaving the trail. Specific fence, gate, and crossing designs will be determined in consultations with adjacent affected property owner(s) at the Use and Management Plan stage.*
- b. All new trails/facilities shall be sited away from the edges of new preserves to the greatest extent possible. All new trails/facilities will be designed to preserve existing vegetation within new preserves and at the property lines so that views of land uses in adjacent residential properties would be minimized.*
- c. Trails shall be sited a minimum distance of 300 feet from occupied dwellings unless site-specific circumstances make this infeasible. Where a 300-foot setback is not feasible, trails shall be set back a minimum distance of 50 feet. Potential noise and privacy impacts must be evaluated for any subsequent District action and shall be reduced by berms, fencing, landscaping, and other feasible and compatible means, if necessary.*

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 8

The District will consider neighbors' concerns, including the desire for privacy on properties that adjoin District lands, and assist with the prevention of unintentional trespass by preserve visitors through the following:

- 8.1 Evaluate potential noise and privacy impacts when planning trails and facilities adjacent to private property. Reduce potential noise or privacy impacts with berms, fencing, landscaping, and other feasible and compatible means, if possible.
- 8.2 Carefully conduct District business (such as performing maintenance or installing fencing) to avoid encroachment on adjacent private property. If a neighbor believes that the District is encroaching on adjacent private property, he or she should notify the District as soon as possible.
- 8.3 Site new trails and facilities away from private property boundaries, to the extent possible, and design trails to preserve existing vegetation and to minimize views of adjacent residential properties' land uses. An effort will be made to site new trails 300 feet from occupied dwellings on neighboring properties, to the extent feasible. If infeasible, the District will seek to maintain a minimum setback of 50 feet. Fencing or visual screens may be used by the District to prevent trespassing in rare cases when trails are located directly adjacent to private property.

## POLICY PROVISION 9

*Upon completion of the annexation process and with public involvement through local groups, the District shall conduct public hearings to develop its Basic Policies for the Coastsides Protection Area. These hearings shall address, at a minimum, the following topics: public participation; resource management; public access; recreational use; public safety; cultural resources; agricultural and timber production; interagency relationships; and public information.*

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 9

Individuals, local groups, and organizations will be consulted through a process that will involve public meetings and offer ample other opportunities, such as e-mail, to provide input concerning the development of Basic Policies specific to the Coastsides Protection Area.

### **POLICY PROVISION 10**

(Coastside Protection Area only)

*As noted in 6 on page 19, all proposed Coastside Protection Area policies shall be considered by the full Board of Directors at public meetings held in the Coastside Protection Area.*

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 10**

The Board of Directors will hold public meetings in the Coastside Protection Area, as necessary, when policy changes specifically affect the coast.

### **POLICY PROVISION 11**

(Coastside Protection Area only)

*A District staff liaison will be assigned to the Coastside Protection Area to work with local residents, property owners, government, and interest groups in developing recommendations to the District's Board of Directors.*

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 11**

The District's planning manager is the primary staff liaison to work with local residents, property owners, local elected officials, government agencies, and neighborhood and other interest groups in developing recommendations for the District's Board of Directors.

### **POLICY PROVISION 12**

*The Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee, a Standing Committee of the Board, shall at an annual public meeting review the Good Neighbor Policy and its implementation and effectiveness. The Good Neighbor Policy shall be amended as necessary to ensure the best possible relationship between the District and its neighbors.*

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 12**

The District will review the Good Neighbor Policy annually at a public meeting of the District's Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee, the location of which will be rotated among different sites in the District, to ensure its continued effectiveness and implementation. Based on input from the public, the Board will amend the Policy, as necessary, to ensure the best possible relationship between the District and its neighbors.

Throughout the year, the District will also gather information and suggestions that neighbors provide to staff in person or send in via the Web site, e-mail or regular mail.

### **POLICY PROVISION 13**

*The District shall develop a Good Neighbor Brochure and shall update it regularly and distribute it to property owners with land adjoining District preserves. The brochure shall contain the following information:*

- 1. Emergency contact information for District and other agencies by nature of emergency (fire, flooding, medical, illegal activity, abandoned vehicles, etc.)*
- 2. District contact for resource management (weed abatement, feral animal control, restoration and re-vegetation, etc.)*
- 3. District contact for fire and hazard prevention (fuel management, information regarding fire-safe practices, fallen or hazardous trees, etc.)*
- 4. District contact for conflicts between neighbors and preserve visitors (trespass, parking, noise, etc.)*
- 5. District contact for general questions regarding use and management of preserves*
- 6. How to make a suggestion or file a complaint regarding use and management of District preserves or the District's operation in general (phone, write, e-mail, in person)*
  - Contact information for Ombudsperson*
  - Management and Board of Directors contact information*
  - Web site address*
  - Office hours and location*
  - Board meeting dates and times*
- 7. Copy of the Good Neighbor Policy*

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE 13**

The District will develop and periodically update a Board-approved Good Neighbor Brochure, which will include all the items listed under Policy Provision 13 above, among others. At the annual public meeting to review the Good Neighbor Policy, input on the brochure will also be solicited and the Board will be fully informed of constituents' recommendations. The brochure will be made available to neighbors.

## SECTION 2: LAND PURCHASE, PLANNING, AND MANAGEMENT

The District will encourage neighbors to provide input in the following ways:

1. For potential new land purchases or land transfers and management agreements, the District will notify adjoining property owners of Board and Board committee meetings where issues such as access to the new property and changes to existing land uses will be discussed. For significant or coastside purchases, the Real Property Committee will conduct public on-site meetings which may occur on weekends.
2. The District will evaluate access to newly acquired land by neighbors on a case-by-case basis to ensure public safety and determine whether access is compatible with District ordinances and low-impact recreation. To the extent feasible, the District will consider continuing access through a permit system managed by the District.
3. In managing District preserves, to the extent possible, the District will:
  - a. Control non-native vegetation and animals and initiate cooperative efforts with neighbors to control non-natives on lands adjacent to District preserves.
  - b. Minimize the impact on native plants when removing invasives.
  - c. Consider neighbors' desire to preserve the natural landscape viewshed.
  - d. Cooperate with local and state fire officials on emergency response and fire prevention.
  - e. Implement its resource management policies.



*Former Big Dipper Ranch Area,  
Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve*

### SECTION 3: PUBLIC INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

District staff will provide information to educate neighbors about the District, its mission, events, and activities. Interaction with neighbors through outreach is one way to provide services to them. The following provisions will guide the District's public education and outreach to neighbors:

1. Following close of escrow of land purchased, the District will acquaint new neighbors with policies and ordinances by providing each adjacent property owner with a letter of introduction, and a copy of the District's basic policies and ordinances.
2. Generally represent the District in the community by attending local community meetings and contacting neighbors on relevant issues, as appropriate.
3. Provide information through a variety of means such as the District's Web site, e-mail, quarterly newsletter, and signboards, among others.
4. Make reasonable efforts to address and resolve situations that may arise between neighbors and the District. The District may also respond to specific neighborhood concerns by holding office and/or site meetings, as needed.
5. The Board has appointed an Ombudsperson to assist the public with their interactions with the District and facilitate the resolution of conflicts. The Ombudsperson works independently and objectively to assist in maintaining positive relations with District residents and neighbors. Contact information for the Ombudsperson is listed in the Good Neighbor Brochure.

#### OTHER RELEVANT DISTRICT POLICIES

Below is a list of specific policies approved by the Board of Directors that provide additional direction on many aspects of District business and complement the *Good Neighbor Policy*:

1. The existing *Basic Policy* provides public information about the mission, purpose, strategic direction, and major elements of the District's operations.
2. The *Public Notification Policy* ensures that reasonable and timely efforts are made to notify surrounding landowners and interested members of the public of District activities.
3. *Land Acquisition Policies and Procedures* offer information about land purchases. This also includes the restrictive policy under which the District may use eminent domain to purchase

private land at fair market value. Eminent domain in the Coastside Protection Area has been permanently removed as a District power by California state law under an agreement with the San Mateo County Farm Bureau.

4. *Resource Management Policies* establish techniques to restore the natural environment and define the practices to protect and manage resources, including managing vegetation, encouraging native plants, controlling non-native plants and animals, agricultural practices, and use of fire as a land management tool.
5. *Use and Management Planning Process* is a public process to develop use and management policies for District lands to protect the natural environment and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.
6. The District is developing an *Encroachment Policy*. This Policy will educate District neighbors and users of open space areas about activities that are not allowed on District land, or allowed only by permit. The Policy's goal is to protect public lands from encroachment. Examples of encroachments are a fence or trail that has been placed on District lands without permission.
7. The policies for *Road Maintenance Agreements* describe the parameters under which the District will enter into road agreements, including cost-sharing and other arrangements.

In the near future, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District will develop or amend a number of public policies and policy documents. For example, the District's Public Notification Policy and its Basic Policy will both be revised and a set of Basic Policies will be developed for the San Mateo County coastside.

### **PHOTO CREDITS**

Page 6: *Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve.*

Page 7: *Tunitas Creek Open Space Preserve.*

Page 9: *Picchetti Ranch Open Space Preserve.*

Page 14: *Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.*

Page 15: *Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve; Long Ridge Open Space Preserve.*

- <sup>1</sup> *Neighbor – Residents and property owners located adjacent or close to a District preserve who may be affected by maintenance or visitor activities on the preserves.*
- <sup>2</sup> *Coastside Protection Area – The area extends from the southern border of the City of Pacifica southerly to the San Mateo/Santa Cruz County line and westerly from the existing District preserves along Hwy. 35 (Skyline Blvd.).*
- <sup>3</sup> *Service Plan – The District’s plan for the Coastside Protection Program on the San Mateo County coast, which outlines preservation and management services that will be provided by the District.*



Sreether Smith

Fremont Older Open Space Preserve

## LEGAL NOTE

The purpose of this Policy is to promote good relationships with the District’s neighbors by providing guidance to the District and to the public on how to best build and maintain positive relationships. This Policy represents the District’s commitment to the principles contained in it. Government agencies like the District are subject to many legal requirements in carrying out its mission. It’s not the purpose of this Policy to adopt new legal requirements but rather to supplement what the law already requires with a set of additional standards to which the District is publicly committed. No action taken by the District will be invalid merely for a failure to comply with this Policy.

## Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

330 Distel Circle • Los Altos, California 94022-1404

Phone: 650-691-1200 • Fax: 650-691-0485

E-mail: [info@openspace.org](mailto:info@openspace.org)

Web site: [www.openspace.org](http://www.openspace.org)

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Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, Deane Little;  
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