

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

OPEN SPACE VIEWS

PARTNERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Deer Hollow Farm at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

The District strives to reach out to local communities and remain actively involved in programs that encourage appreciation of and connection with nature. Community partnerships are one way the District has been able to accomplish this. Deer Hollow Farm, located at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve near Los Altos, is a great example of a successful partnership. The City of Mountain View, the County of Santa Clara, the District, and the Friends of Deer Hollow Farm believe the working homestead and environmental education programs at Deer Hollow Farm should be preserved as a Bay Area resource and have partnered to fund this program; the City of Mountain View operates the farm.

School classes, community groups, and families can observe and participate in a working farm and explore the surrounding wilderness. During the 2004-2005 school year, over 4,000 students (200 classes from 39 local schools in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties) visited the farm and participated in programs about the farm, wilderness, and Native Americans. A handful of staff members and 60 volunteers



Deer Hollow Farm Staff and Children Participating in Summer Day Camp Program, Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

assisted with K-5th grade school groups and helped at the farm throughout the year. The education programs extend into summer with an additional 400 children, grades 1-9, participating in week-long day camps.

The District is pleased to support the farm and provide the land, and acknowledges the wonderful contributions of its partners and friends at Deer Hollow Farm, the City of Mountain View, and the County of Santa Clara. It is through these programs that we have the opportunity to come together as a community to educate and instill in children the importance of caring for fellow creatures and open space lands in a responsible way within today's urban world.

School Year Programs: Registration occurs in early September. Contact Deer Hollow Farm at (650) 903-6430, or e-mail at dhfarms@ci.mtnview.ca.us, for registration information.


Summer Camps: Contact the Mountain View Recreation Department at (650) 903-6331 for registration information. 



Photo by Karl Gohl

SEASONAL SAFETY TIPS

From Skyline Ranger Chris Barresi

As we're reporting on the news of last fiscal year, we'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a new feature of *Open Space Views*. In an effort to keep District visitors safe, informed, and aware while visiting the open space preserves, we'll be featuring seasonal safety tips contributed by District staff members.


The excellent quality of life in the Bay Area is due in part to the vast areas of preserved open space land and the temperate climate that allows us to enjoy the outdoors year-round. When exploring open space on the still-lingering warm days of fall, or any time of the year, please keep in mind the safety basics:

- ◆ Bring layered clothing to stay warm if the fog suddenly rolls in or to shed layers to keep cool.
- ◆ Bring plenty of water to drink and stay hydrated (remember that your dog needs water too).
- ◆ Don't overdo it on hot days; heat-related emergencies can be serious and can occur quickly in hot weather.

Although the above tips are the fundamentals of outdoor safety, they always bear repeating. There are some tips, however, that

are thought of less often, but can make a big difference in the event of an emergency in any season:

- ◆ Hike or ride with a friend when possible; or, if alone, make sure someone knows where you are going and when you plan on returning; you may consider leaving a note on your vehicle dashboard with your anticipated route that can be read by rangers or others if you are overdue.
- ◆ If an emergency occurs on the trail, know what to do. This includes being aware of the location of the closest phone or call box because cellular telephones may not have reception on the preserves. Know the name of the preserve you are in and the trail name where the emergency is located. If possible, have someone try to meet incoming emergency responders at a road or trail/patrol road intersection. The more accurately you can describe the location of the incident, the quicker and more effective the emergency responders will be.

While we hope all of your visits to open space are safe, District rangers and many of the maintenance staff are trained, equipped, and ready to help in the event of an emergency. 

Regional Open Space



2004-2005 ANNUAL MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER, L. CRAIG BRITTON

GROWING THE GREENBELT: PLANNING & PROTECTION OF OUR OPEN SPACE LANDS IN A TIME OF FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Each year, I'm given the opportunity to report on the Open Space District's fiscal year. In focusing on fiscal year 2004-2005, the District completed some historic and unique projects, and a definite theme of planning for protected lands in a time of continued fiscal constraint emerged. As the District entered its second year of losing a percentage of its revenue, I continued to closely monitor the State budget process for any potential impact on the District and its programs and to work with other appropriate agencies and our legislative advocate to minimize the budget impact to the greatest extent possible.

Coastside Protection Program

The District's Coastside Protection Program cleared its final hurdle on September 7, 2004, when the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) recorded the Program's Certificate of Completion. The District's boundary was officially extended to the Pacific Ocean in San Mateo County from the southern border of Pacifica to the San Mateo/Santa Cruz County line, increasing the size of the District from 331 to 556 square miles. This was an exciting day for the District as it marked a major milestone in the District's history, and represented the culmination of more than seven years spent developing the Program in collaboration with coastside residents.

Since the Program's Certificate was recorded, there have been several major developments. First, the District appointed an Ombudsperson to serve as a vital communication link between the District and its constituents. The District's Board also voted to approve a redistricting plan, which resulted in the expansion of Wards 6 and 7 to ensure democratic representation for the approximately 30,000 residents in the Coastside Protection Area who became District constituents when the Program was approved. District staff has also begun attending local government and community meetings to discuss the public process for the upcoming revision of the District's Good Neighbor Policy.

Master Planning

In October 2004, the District began a 15-month master planning process to develop a resource protection and visitor use plan for Sierra Azul and Bear Creek Redwoods Preserves. Through the master planning process, the District aims to provide the public with greater opportunities for recreation access, interpretation, and education, while protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the combined 18,000 acres that comprise this landscape.

The District is also concurrently preparing the master plan for La Honda Creek Preserve and has completed stakeholder interviews, conducted two visioning workshops, and one public field trip. As the District works to develop a long-term vision for these public lands, I encourage folks to visit the project pages on the District's Web site to learn more about upcoming planning workshops and other participatory activities.



Deane Little
Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Watershed Protection Program

The District also continued implementing its Watershed Protection Program. This Program is designed to protect and restore watershed integrity and downstream habitat of the federally threatened steelhead trout and Coho salmon, while maintaining opportunities for year-round multiple use recreation and environmental awareness at El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve. The realignment of the Blue Blossom Trail was completed in summer 2004 and was followed by realignment of the Crossover Trail. As the Program continues, repairs and erosion and sedimentation control measures will continue to be applied to the Preserve's trails and patrol roads.

Trail Guide Book Completion

In December 2004, the District released its first-ever trail guide book *Peninsula Tales & Trails: Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District*. The District's trail guide book has been well-received by the public, media, and industry representatives, and book sales have been robust. *Peninsula Tales & Trails* is still available for sale at local bookstores and via traditional Internet retail sites, and copies signed by author David Weintraub are still available at the District office for \$19.95 per book (not including sales tax).

On the Horizon

With closure of the 2004-2005 fiscal year, my attention has turned to what's on the horizon for 2005-2006. The District will work to protect land on the San Mateo Coast through land purchases from willing sellers and management agreements in accordance with the Coastal Service Plan. The District is already off to a fruitful start with management of the 183-acre Forde property near Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve and the 151-acre Rapley Ranch adjacent to Russian Ridge Preserve, and the purchase of the 676-acre Miramontes Ridge property adjacent to Mills Creek Preserve. The 2005-2006 fiscal year will also mark the District's preservation of 50,000 acres of open space "in the green," a significant milestone in its 33-year history.



Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve
Karl Gohl

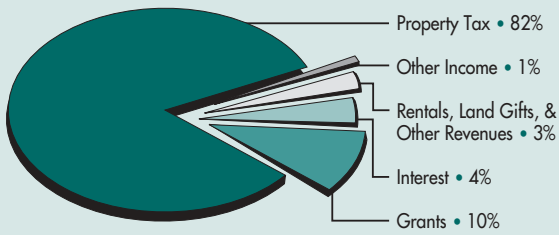
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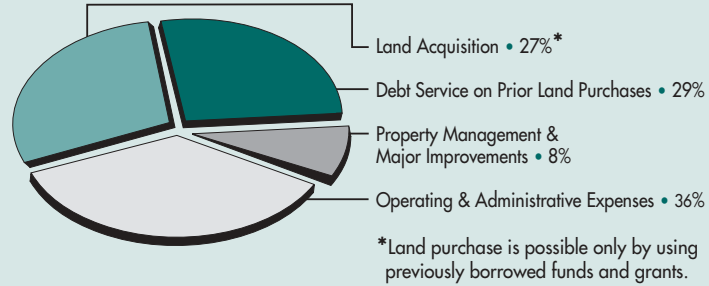
L. Craig Britton ♦ General Manager ♦ Kristi Altieri ♦ Open Space Views Editor ♦ Renée Fitzsimons ♦ Outdoor Activities Editor

Our mission is 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.

2004-2005 FINANCIAL PROFILE



Total Revenues: \$22.733 million



Total Expenses: \$23.386 million

The District's annual expenses exceed revenue because borrowed funds are used to purchase land. The amounts noted on this page are rounded. For a copy of the audited financial report, please contact the District office.

Despite market challenges, the District pursued opportunities to purchase new land at reasonable (fair market) values and purchased approximately 814.62 acres of open space land this year at a cost of \$6.69 million. Properties purchased included additions to Sierra Azul, Coal Creek, Monte Bello, El Sereno, Pulgas Ridge, and Windy Hill Open Space Preserves. The District also entered into License and Management Agreements at El Sereno and Saratoga Gap Open Space Preserves.

The District continued to seek and obtain grant funding under various programs offered by voter-approved park bond programs. Grants and commitments for future grant funding added \$4.05 million to the District's land purchase potential. These grants included (1) a matching grant totaling \$1.69 million from the California Coastal Conservancy for the purchase of the Presentation Center property addition to Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, (2) a matching grant from the California Coastal Conservancy totaling \$2.050 million for the purchase of the POST (Miramontes Ridge) property addition to Mills Creek Open Space Preserve, (3) a matching grant from the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council for the purchase of the Neville property addition to Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, and (4) as an addition to the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, a matching contribution from Santa Clara County for the purchase of the Keyani property.

In total, the District received \$18.587 million in tax revenues, a decrease of 2.6% over the previous year because of the impact of the State's fiscal

impound on local governments. In July 2004, the State imposed a two-year shift in property tax revenue from local governments to state-funded programs, and as a result, the District will lose \$3.47 million of its scheduled property tax revenues over the next three fiscal years, ending June 30, 2006. In 2004-2005, the District transferred \$1.57 million to the State. Excluding the \$1.57 million impact of this temporary measure, the underlying tax revenue growth was above average at 5.5%. Despite the loss in revenue, the District was able to maintain its spending priorities for land purchase and resource protection while tightening expenditures in other areas. Actual expenditures were slightly short of what was budgeted. The District issued no new debt this fiscal year.

Property taxes represented 82% of the District's total income. Other revenue sources included grants received (\$2.266 million), donations (\$182,961), investment income (\$910,289), and revenue from rentals and leases (\$786,106). The District's expenses were \$8.41 million for operational and administrative costs and \$1.420 million for capital outlays (vehicles, equipment) and infrastructure improvements. The cost of debt service payments on the District's principal and interest for previous land purchase was \$6.890 million. Debt service and land purchases made up 57% of total expenditures.

The overall financial health of the District remains strong and stable, and the District remains committed to a cautious approach in spending for operational expenses.

VISITOR SURVEY FINDINGS

Earlier this year, the District conducted its first-ever on-line Visitor Survey to enable constituents to provide feedback about the District's preserves and programs. The District received comments from 360 survey participants who responded via the District's Web site. Members of the public provided input on a range of topics such as familiarity with the open space preserves and importance of activities, which provides the District with a snapshot of visitor opinions.

Some of the survey findings revealed:

- ❖ The community seems very familiar with the preserves, and frequently visit the open space preserves, with the vast majority of respondents reporting that they visit the preserves 1-2 times per month and 1-2 times per week.
- ❖ The top three District activities that were important to survey participants were:
 - ❖ Constructing and maintaining trails
 - ❖ Acquiring open space lands
 - ❖ Protecting and restoring the natural environment
- ❖ The top two activities enjoyed most when visiting a District preserve were:
 - ❖ Mountain biking
 - ❖ Hiking

- ❖ El Corte de Madera Creek, Long Ridge, Monte Bello, Purisima Creek Redwoods, and Sierra Azul Preserves were frequently mentioned as favorite District preserves.

As part of the survey, the District also received a number of comments and suggestions, a few of which are highlighted below:

"Volunteer trail maintenance events are well organized."

"I think the trails are really well maintained, a good job is being done there."

"Link District lands with other lands for regional trails."

"Keep all open space areas alive and kicking!!!"

"Continue to work with the entire community to maintain access to all types of activities."

"I would like to see more trails opened to bicycles."

In particular, I would like to bike the entire Bay Area Ridge Trail."

This is an informal survey and is intended to provide information about public impressions of the District and to aid in confirming the success of current public outreach and District programs and determining the need for adjustments. District staff has compiled the survey results and will be sharing the information with the Board of Directors, departments within the organization, and the public.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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Fall News About Your Open Space District

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 Favorite Places & Spaces Survey.14

Pull out and save your schedule of fall *Outdoor Activities* in open space and . . .
 be sure to visit us on our Web site for preserve maps, volunteer opportunities, and more.
www.openspace.org

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE PLACES & SPACES?

Tell us about your favorite place or space on the District's open space preserves. Whether it's a great place to see wildlife, an outstanding view, a little-known hiking path or a well-worn trail, or your children's or your canine's favorite day trip, we'd like to hear about it.
 Be sure to visit the District's Web site at www.openspace.org to complete the on-line survey or use the form below to cast your vote for the "best of the best" in open space. **Submit your entry by Monday, October 10, 2005.** All entries submitted must be within a District open space preserve. Results will be published in a future issue of *Open Space Views*.

CATEGORY	PRESERVE	SPECIFIC TRAIL OR LOCATION
Best or Favorite Preserve Overall	_____	_____
Best Place to See Wildlife	_____	_____
Best Place to Picnic	_____	_____
Best Place to Go with Children	_____	_____
Best Hike	_____	_____
Best Place to Mountain Bike	_____	_____
Best Panoramic View	_____	_____
Best Place to Ride Your Horse	_____	_____
Best Place to Walk Your Dog	_____	_____
Best Place for Photo Taking	_____	_____

T-SHIRT GIVEAWAY

One "best of the best" entry will be randomly selected to receive a T-shirt created in celebration of the District's preservation of 50,000 acres. Please be sure to include your name and phone number or e-mail address so that we may contact you in the event your entry is the winner.

Name _____ Phone Number or E-mail Address _____