



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-13-62
Meeting 13-14
June 26, 2013

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM

Informational Presentation on Apple Orchard Bioblitz

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Receive an informational presentation on a bioblitz conducted at the Apple Orchard property of the Driscoll Ranch.

SUMMARY

The Board will be shown a Power Point presentation by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) staff regarding a bioblitz conducted at the Apple Orchard property of the Driscoll Ranch and other methods used to collect biological information on District preserves.

DISCUSSION

On May 10, 2013 over a period of approximately 24-hours, twenty-one biologists conducted a bioblitz on 300 acres at the Apple Orchard property of the Driscoll Ranch. A bioblitz is an event where as many plant and animal species as possible are identified in a short period of time in a specific area.

URS Corporation provided their services at no charge for a total of over 240 hours of labor, including preparation, survey of the property, travel, data organization, and preparation of a short report and map. The experts they provided were in the following disciplines: archeology, wetlands, botany, freshwater invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. URS Corporation provided 17 biologists who were joined by 3 District biologists and one biologist with the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST).

A total of 313 plant species were identified including two rare species: western leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*) at numerous locations, and Gairdner's yampah (*Perideridia gairdneri* ssp. *gairdneri*) at one location.

Four wetland areas were mapped on the property in addition to three tributaries which border the property (San Gregorio Creek, Harrington Creek and an unnamed tributary). The California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) was observed in a willow-covered wetland on the property, and the carcass of a western pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata*) was found along Highway 84 near the

property indicating that both of these rare species are likely to disperse across the property and may breed in suitable creek or pond habitat on the property or nearby. The property shows potential for improving and creating new habitat for these two rare species and for the San Francisco garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*).

Forty-three species of birds were seen or heard and dense pockets of breeding and nesting behavior were observed in the grasslands and riparian corridor. The mammals that were either directly observed or for which sign was detected were: deer mice, dusky-footed woodrat, pocket gopher, ground squirrel, bobcat, fox, and coyote.

A narrow-gauge railroad bridge, that also appeared to be capable of carrying automobile crossings, was discovered on the property line with the Sears Ranch area of the Driscoll Ranch.

The Apple Orchard bioblitz is an example of one way the District gathers information on biological resources on preserves. This presentation will briefly discuss other methods by which we gain new biological information for the preserves including: staff surveys, consultant surveys, university research studies, wildlife cameras, and rare plant treasure hunts with the California Native Plant Society.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

Committee review is not required for this agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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