Mindego Ranch Use and Management Plan

Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

PREPARED FOR:
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

November 2013

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
AC&W	Aircraft Control and Warning
AFS	Air Force Station
APNs	Assessor's Parcel Numbers
ARB	California Air Resources Board
BAAQMD	Bay Area Air Quality Management District's
CAA	federal Clean Air Act
CAAA	federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CH_4	methane
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
CO_2	carbon dioxide
cy	cubic yards
dBA	A-weighted decibels
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FUDS	Formerly Used Defense Sites,
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	General Services Administration
GWP	global warming potential
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
Hillsides	HS
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IS	Initial Study
IS/Proposed MND	Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration
MROSD	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
MT/year	metric tons per year

N_2O	nitrous oxide
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
OHP	State Office of Historic Preservation's
OSHA	Occupation Safety and Health Administration
PCBs	polychlorinated biphenyls
PELS	Permissible exposure limits
PRC	Public Resources Code
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SFBAAB	San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin
SHWW	San Jose Water Works
TAC	toxic air contaminants
TWA	Time-weighted average limit
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/Proposed MND) has been prepared by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) to evaluate the potential environmental effects resulting from implementation of the proposed Use and Management Plan (U&M Plan) for the Mindego Ranch property (project site) located within the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve (RROP). Ascent Environmental, Inc. has been retained by the District to prepare this analysis on their behalf. The project site is a 1,047 acre former cattle ranch located 2 miles east of the community of La Honda in the Santa Cruz Mountains, within unincorporated San Mateo County

This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.). An initial study (IS) is prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[a]), and thus to determine the appropriate environmental document. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a "public agency shall prepare…a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration…when: (a) The Initial Study shows that there is no substantial evidence…that the project may have a significant impact on the environment, or (b) The Initial Study identifies potentially significant effects but revisions to the project plans or proposal are agreed to by the applicant and such revisions would reduce potentially significant effects to a less-than-significant level." In this circumstance, the lead agency prepares a written statement describing its reasons for concluding that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). By contrast, an EIR is required when the project may have a significant environmental impact that cannot clearly be reduced to a less-than-significant effect by adoption of mitigation or by revisions in the project design.

1.2 WHY THIS DOCUMENT?

As described in the environmental checklist (Chapter 3), the proposed project would not result in any unmitigated significant environmental impacts. Therefore, an IS/Proposed MND is the appropriate document for compliance with the requirements of CEQA. This IS/Proposed MND conforms to these requirements and to the content requirements of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15071.

Under CEQA, the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over approval of the proposed project. The District is the lead agency for the proposed U&M Plan. The District has directed the preparation of an analysis that complies with CEQA. The purpose of this document is to present to decision-makers and the public information about the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed project. This disclosure document is being made available to the public for review and comment. CEQA requires a minimum 20-day public review period for IS/MNDs. Due to the holidays, MROSD will make the IS/Proposed MND available for a 40-day public review period from November 26, 2013 to January 6, 2014.

Supporting documentation referenced in this document is available for review at the MROSD office:

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Comments should be addressed to:

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If you have questions regarding the IS/Proposed MND, please call Lisa Bankosh at (650) 691-1200. If you wish to send written comments (including via e-mail), they must be postmarked by January 6, 2014.

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, the District may (1) adopt the MND and approve the proposed project; (2) undertake additional environmental studies; or (3) abandon the project. If the project is approved and funded, the District may proceed with the project.

1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter 3 of this document contains the analysis and discussion of potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Based on the issues evaluated in that chapter, it was determined that the proposed project would have either no impact or a less-than-significant impact related to all but six of the issue areas identified in the Environmental Checklist, included as Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. These include the following issue areas:

- agricultural resources,
- geology and soils,
- greenhouse gas emissions
- land use and planning,
- mineral resources,
- noise,
- population and housing,
- public services,
- recreation,
- transportation/traffic,
- utilities and service systems, and
- mandatory findings of significance.

Potentially significant impacts were identified with respect to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards, and hydrology/water quality; however, mitigation measures included in the IS/Proposed MND would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS

In addition to District approval, the project may require Section 404 Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Compliance with Endangered Species Act Section 7 as enforced by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Compliance with California Department of Fish and Game Code Sections 1602 and 2080.1, Section 401 certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, notification of demolition and possible approval of an asbestos plan by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and issuance of planning entitlement, as well as grading permits by San Mateo County.

1.5 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This IS/Proposed MND is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides an introduction to the environmental review process. It describes the purpose and organization of this document as well as presents a summary of findings.

Chapter 2: Project Description and Background. This chapter describes the purpose of and need for the proposed project, identifies project objectives, and provides a detailed description of the proposed project.

Chapter 3: Environmental Checklist. This chapter presents an analysis of a range of environmental issues identified in the CEQA Environmental Checklist and determines if each of a range of impacts would result in no impact, a less-than-significant impact, a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated, or a potentially significant impact. If any impacts were determined to be potentially significant, an EIR would be required. For this project, however, none of the impacts were determined to be significant after implementation of mitigation measures.

Chapter 4: References. This chapter lists the references used in preparation of this IS/Proposed MND.

Chapter 5: List of Preparers. This chapter identifies report preparers.

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2 BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The project would implement the proposed Use and Management Plan (U&M Plan) for the 1,047 acre Mindego Ranch Property within the District's Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. The proposed U&M Plan focuses on habitat restoration projects to benefit resident populations of California red-legged frog and San Francisco garter snake. Other planned actions include re-introduction of cattle grazing to the property, road and trail maintenance to reduce erosion, and routine patrol activities. The U& M Plan also includes minimal public access to the property, namely opening access to an existing donor recognition site to hikers and equestrians.

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project area, a 1,047-acre former cattle ranch, was added to the District's RROSP in 2008. A Preliminary Use and Management Plan, which maintained status quo management on the Mindego Ranch property, was approved as part of the purchase (MROSD 2008). Subsequently, the District conducted biological surveys on the property which documented the existence of a population of San Francisco garter snake (SFGS), a federally-listed endangered species. Because of the biological sensitivity of this species, which includes federal regulation of activities within its habitat, the District has engaged in long-term planning to ensure that future District public access and land management objectives are fully consistent with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

District staff has worked closely with resource specialists to develop land management recommendations for Mindego Ranch, including pond restoration, re-introduction of cattle grazing, and road and trail improvements to reduce erosion and facilitate adequate maintenance and patrol of the property. These recommendations have been consolidated into the proposed U&M Plan for Mindego Ranch. The U&M Plan is intended to guide stewardship of the property for the next twenty to thirty years.

In 2012, the District approved very limited public access to Mindego Ranch in the form of a hiking/equestrian trail to the summit of Mindego Hill (the "Mindego Hill Trail; estimated to be constructed in 2014 and open to the public in 2015) and prohibited off-trail use due to the presence of sensitive habitats and wildlife (MROSD 2012). Aside from opening an existing donor recognition site to the public, this U&M plan does not propose further access to the property.

2.2.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLANS

The following documents are incorporated into the U&M Plan and will guide implementation for several components, including habitat restoration, grazing management, and roadway improvements:

- **San Francisco Garter Snake Habitat Management Plan.** This habitat management plan was prepared specifically for the proposed project by Biosearch in September 2012. The management plan provides USFWS-compliant strategy to encourage the recovery of SFGS by improving habitat conditions for SFGS and California red legged frog (CRLF), a primary food source for SFGS. Habitat management actions include temporarily draining Mindego Lake to eradicate non-native species, and removing sediment and vegetation from other ponds on the property to improve breeding habitat for CRLF. The habitat enhancement actions were designed to benefit the SFGS and would be implemented under an endangered species recovery or enhancement permit issued by the USFWS.

- **Road and Trail Erosion Inventory: Mindego Ranch Area.** This report, prepared by Timothy C. Best, CEG, in November 2012, inventories the condition and erosion potential along existing roads and trails into and within Mindego Ranch, focusing on potential risk for future sediment delivery to streams, and locations where road or trail upgrades are needed. The report identifies feasible repairs to minimize erosion and repair damaged roads. The report also includes an assessment of long-term maintenance requirements.
- **Mindego Hill Ranch Grazing Management Plan. This graz**ing plan was prepared specifically for the proposed project by Sage Associates in October 2012. The grazing plan provides appropriate management practices for a conservation grazing program, including soil and water conservation, erosion control, pest management, nutrient management, water quality, and habitat protection associated with the onsite grasslands that are proposed for grazing.

2.2.2 OTHER APPLICABLE PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND STUDIES

The following planning documents and technical studies, which are referenced throughout this IS/MND, apply directly or indirectly to the Mindego Ranch property and the proposed project.

- **Service Plan for the Coastside Protection Area.** The Service Plan for the Coastside Protection Area (Service Plan) was adopted with the Coastal Annexation EIR in 2003. The Service Plan includes guidelines and implementation actions for the Coastside Protection Area. Many of these guidelines and actions include mitigation measures identified in the Coastal Annexation EIR. The guidelines and implementation actions in the Service Plan apply to the entire Mindego Ranch property.
- **Resource Management Policy Document.** The District adopted updated Resource Management Policies in 2011, which define the practices used by the District to protect and manage District lands. These policies apply to all District lands, including the entire Preserve. The Resource Management Policies are available for review on the District's website at http://www.openspace.org/plans_projects/resource_policies.asp.
- **Regulations for Use of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Lands.** The District adopted these regulations for use of District lands in 1993, and most recently revised them in 2004. These policies apply to all District lands, including the entire Preserve.
- **Herbicide Application and Invasive Species Control at Mindego Ranch.** The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) prepared an IS/MND in 2009 for herbicide application. Mitigation measures incorporated into the project include restrictions on pesticide applications and control methods within specified areas surrounding Big Spring, Mindego, and Knuedler Lakes, which provide habitat for special status species, including CRLF and SFGS. The project was approved on May 27, 2009.
- **Mindego Gateway Project.** Located on property directly east of the project area, the Mindego Gateway Project is a partnership between MROSD and Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), which intended to provide public access to the Mindego Hill Area of RROSP. This project will connect the existing Mindego Ridge Trail to the summit of Mindego Hill via the Mindego Hill Trail. The Mindego Hill Trail will be restricted to hikers and equestrians only and average three feet in width. A new parking lot/staging area and a commemorative site to honor the conservation achievements of former POST president Audrey Rust. An IS/MND was prepared for the project in February 2012, and the project was approved June 13, 2012.
- **Approval of Closure-in-Place.** This letter from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, dated September 28, 2012 approves the proposed closure-in-place of an onsite landfill (which reportedly contains 15,000 to 20,000 cubic yards of fill consisting of soil, tree stumps, concrete, and other construction debris, auto bodies, and other materials). The letter also identifies required site management measures, including a stormwater runoff control plan, closure and signage of the filled area, enforcement of access restrictions, and slope inspection.

- **Positive Archaeological Survey Report (PASR) and Finding of No Adverse Effect to Archeological Resources**. This report was prepared for the proposed project in February 2013 by Mark G. Hylkema MA, RPA Archaeologist.
- **Historical Resource Analysis for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Proposed Mindego Ranch Use and Management Plan.** This report was prepared on July 17, 2013 for the proposed project by Ascent Environmental in order to evaluate the historical significance of the onsite structures for the purposes of CEQA. Criteria for determining historical significance has been developed by the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which rests on twin factors of significance and integrity. Based on this criteria, discussed in greater detail in this report, the onsite structures do not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR and are not considered to be historically significant for the purposes of CEQA.

2.3 PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is defined by the boundaries of the Mindego Ranch Property, located 2 miles east of the community of La Honda in the Santa Cruz Mountains, within unincorporated San Mateo County (See Exhibit 2-1 and 2-2). The project site lies near the headwaters of Mindego Creek and Alpine Creek, which are both tributaries to San Gregorio Creek. The site is approximately 1 mile west of the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains and is accessed from Alpine Road via a gravel ranch road. Mindego Ranch is now part of the western portion of the RROSP. The only structures on project site are two vacant single-family residences and a barn. Surrounding land uses include rural residential with some minor, non-commercial agricultural activities.

2.4 SITE DESCRIPTION

Mindego Ranch covers 1,047 acres and is part of the 3,137-acre RROSP. Elevations on the project site range from approximately 700 feet above sea level along Mindego Creek to 2,143 feet at the top of Mindego Hill. Many slopes are steep with deeply cut drainages. The topography of the area is influenced by the San Andreas fault zone. The San Mateo County General Plan designates the project site as Agriculture – Grazing Lands.

2.4.1 ONSITE VEGETATION AND FORESTS

Mindego Ranch supports a mosaic of upland plant communities within four general habitat types: Developed/Ruderal, Mixed Evergreen Forest, Non-native Grassland, and Coyote Brush Scrub. These habitat types are described briefly below and in greater detail in Section 3.4 Biological Resources.

- **California Annual Grassland** is dominated by non-native grasses and forbs including star-thistle, wild oats, wild radish, etc. with occasional native species.
- **Mixed Evergreen Forest** is dominated by a canopy of native trees including oaks, bays, buckeye, and maple with an understory of native shrubs and herbs including poison oak, California hazelnut, blackberry, etc.
- **Coyote Brush Scrub** is dominated by coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), with native shrubs and herbs present including poison oak, California blackberry, toyon, etc.
- **Developed/Ruderal Habitat** consists of areas developed by roads, residences, and other structures, along with ruderal (highly disturbed) areas dominated by weedy, non-native grasses and forbs.

The upper slopes of Mindego Ranch consist of grassland vegetation with occasional stands of mixed hardwood and coniferous forest dispersed throughout the hills and drainages. Understory shrubs have encroached on what once were pasture lands for cattle; many invasive non-native plants have spread over the formerly open landscape.

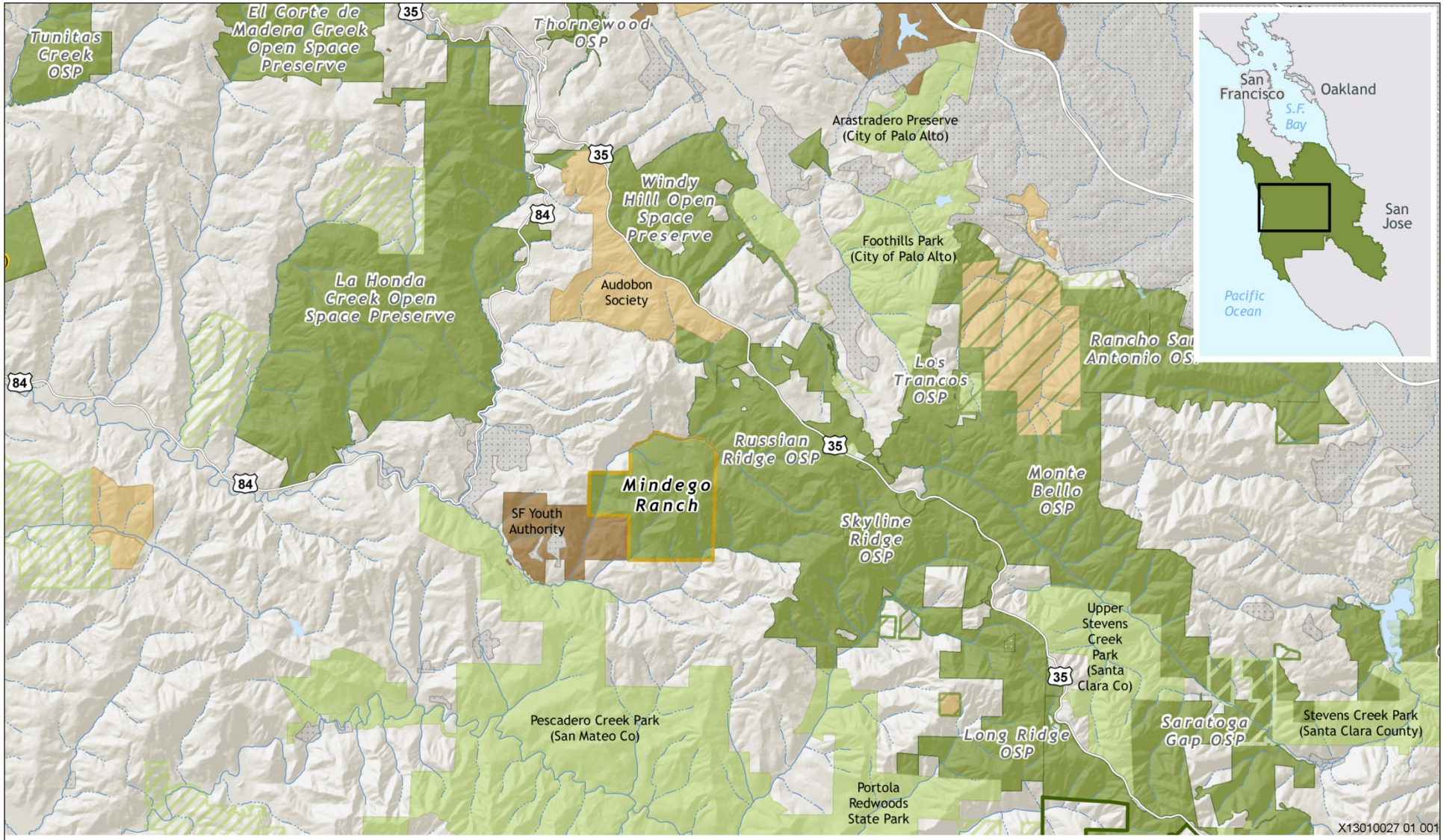

Exhibit 2-1

Regional Location

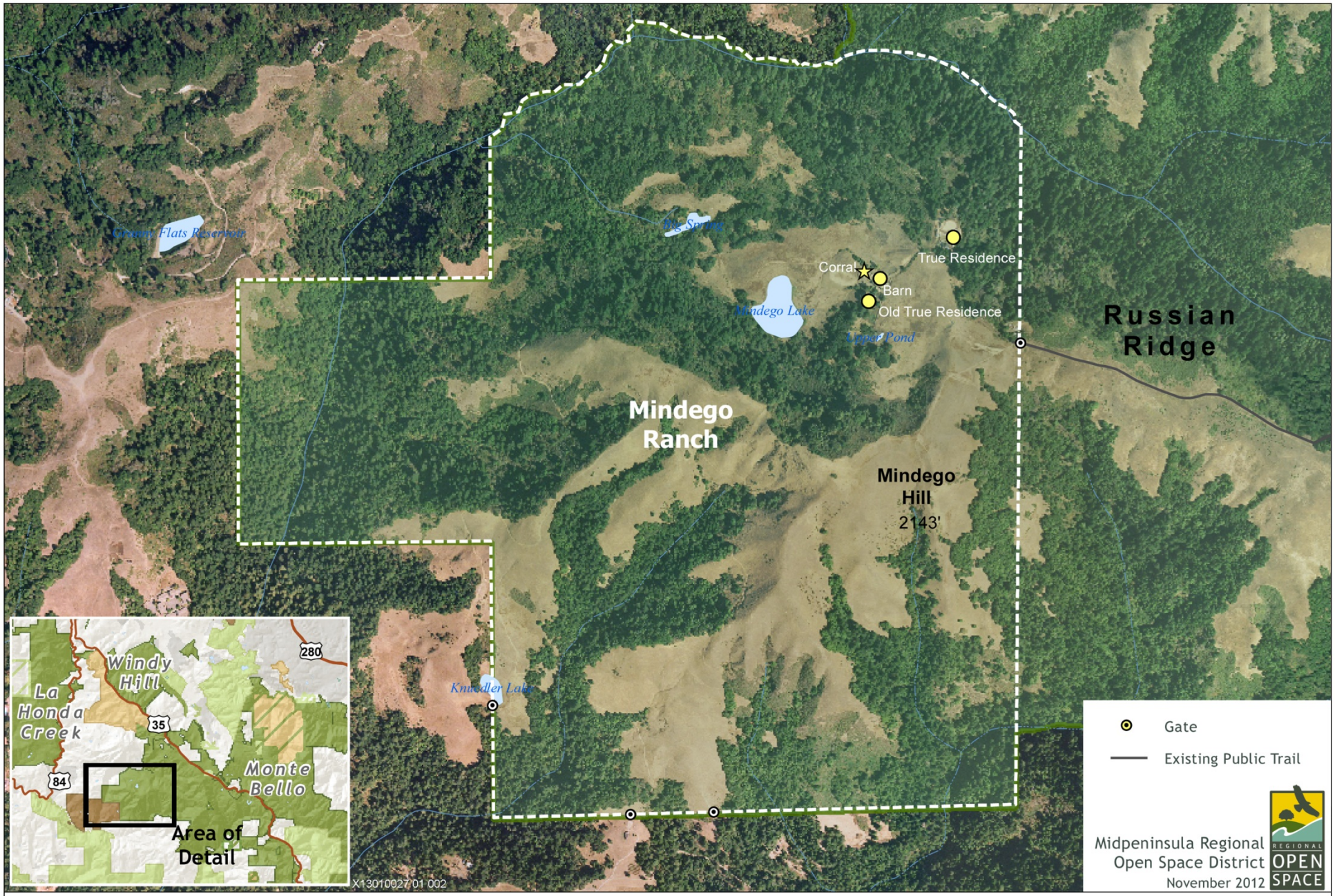

Exhibit 2-2

Ranch Location

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

2.4.2 ONSITE STREAMS, WATERSHEDS, AND AQUATIC HABITAT

Within Mindego Ranch, flows from several natural springs were captured by ranchers who, at some point in the past, constructed earthen berms to create Upper Pond, and Big Spring, Mindego, and Knuedler Lakes to serve as cattle stock ponds. These are described briefly below and in greater detail in Section 3.4 Biological Resources.

- **Mindego Lake** covers approximately 5.4 acres and is composed primarily of open water with depths greater than four feet throughout most of the lake. Herbaceous wetland vegetation dominated by a mixture of native and non-native species grows in shallow areas along the lake fringe. Small stands of willow (*Salix* sp.) grow along the southern perimeter of the lake near the water line. A seep wetland feeds into the lake from the east.
- **Upper Pond** covers approximately 0.15 acre and is composed of a dense cover of herbaceous wetland vegetation dominated by native species, such as bulrush, water cress, and soft rush. Very little open water is present and the pond appears shallow due to sediment accumulation.
- **Big Spring** covers approximately 1 acre and is composed of a multilayered tree canopy with a dense herbaceous understory. Native tree and shrub species grow around the pond fringe. Big Spring supports an extensive amount of riparian habitat that is beneficial to a variety of wildlife.
- **Knuedler Lake** covers approximately 1.15 acres, with the majority of the lake composed of a dense cover of emergent wetland vegetation. The periphery of the lake is dominated by a mixture of native and non-native herbaceous wetland species. A seep wetland occurs on a slope above the southeastern portion of the lake.
- **Mindego Creek** is a perennial stream that traverses the property and eventually drains into San Gregorio Creek and then out to the Pacific Ocean.
- **Rodgers Gulch** is an intermittent stream located on the property.
- **Mindego Creek and Alpine Creek watersheds**, within both of which the project site is located, are tributaries to San Gregorio Creek and part of the San Gregorio Creek basin.

2.4.3 ONSITE STRUCTURES

Two ranch houses and one barn are located on the project site. The Old True Residence, also known as Grandma's House, is a one and one-half story front-gabled home with attached garage and board-and-batten cladding. The residence was built by the True family in the late 1950s. It is in poor condition with extensive dry rot and the roof and doors shows signs of neglect. The barn associated with the Old True Residence is a side-gabled saltbox with a corrugated roof and is in poor condition, with the roof collapsing and boards missing from the walls. The second residence was built in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

2.4.4 PUBLIC ACCESS

Mindego Ranch has not yet been opened to general public access, however small docent-led tours are currently offered. Public access to the summit of Mindego Hill via a new, planned hiking and equestrian trail was approved in 2012 as part of the Mindego Gateway Project. As of this writing, the Mindego Hill Trail has not yet been constructed.

2.5 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed U&M Plan would direct future land management, operations, and public access actions and activities at Mindego Ranch. The goal of the U&M Plan is to protect and enhance habitat for sensitive wildlife species, while responsibly integrating land management activities and limited public access at Mindego Ranch. The proposed U&M Plan elements are described individually below.

2.5.1 HABITAT ENHANCEMENT ACTIONS

The District contracted with expert herpetologists to perform in-depth surveys and recommend measures to protect and enhance populations of SFGS and other sensitive species on the ranch. (See Exhibit 2-3.) The core habitat areas for these species would be designated as Conservation Management Units (CMUs), which would be managed for resource protection rather than public recreation (for more information, refer to Appendix A SFGS Habitat Management Plan). Other than occasional docent-led tours, no public access would be permitted within the CMUs. The Habitat Management Plan also includes physical improvements to improve aquatic habitat for SFGS:

- **Eradicate non-native fish and control bullfrogs** at Mindego Lake to improve SFGS's native prey base, primarily California red-legged frog (CRLF) and Pacific tree frog, as a long-term ecosystem benefit. This involves the following steps:
  a. Temporarily drain Mindego Lake to eliminate non-native fish that prey upon larval CRLF.
  b. Initiate a management program to eliminate the bullfrogs which are aggressive, introduced predators of the CRLF.
- **Increase capacity of smaller ponds** that have partially filled in with sediment and are heavily colonized by aquatic vegetation. Loss of open water habitat has reduced overall habitat quality and impairs successful breeding by CRLF.
- **Install livestock exclusion fencing** in select areas of all four ponds to manage livestock. This would allow cattle to drink at specific locations to help maintain open water habitat while excluding them from portions of the pond to ensure adequate growth of emergent and perimeter vegetation, consistent with CRLF protection.

2.5.2 CONSERVATION GRAZING

Establishment of conservation grazing at Mindego Ranch is a cost-effective strategy to maintain ideal grassland-to-brush ratios for SFGS, control invasive weeds, reduce wildland fire fuel loads, maintain open water habitats in shallow ponds for CRLF, and promote native plant diversity, as well as support a traditional Coastside land use. Significant infrastructure improvements as well as active management and monitoring are essential to meet the objectives of conservation grazing. A grazing management plan was prepared for the property by Sage Associates in 2008, which includes several recommendations to protect water quality on and off the property, and habitat on the project site. As recommended in the grazing assessment, the proposed U&M Plan includes low initial stocking rates (approximately 35 cow-calf pairs in a year-round operation) and the following water system improvements (See Exhibit 2-4; for more information, refer to Appendix B, Grazing Plan):

- Install five new troughs at strategic locations to evenly distribute cattle across the property (See Exhibit 2-3)
- Install two new water tanks to provide livestock and wildlife water throughout the dry months
- Install an electric (solar) pump to distribute the livestock water
- Install 8,000 feet of new, buried PVC water line to supply the water troughs

Mindego Ranch is partially within the drinking water watershed of Cuesta La Honda Guild, which diverts water from Mindego Creek to supply drinking water to approximately 280 residences within the Town of La Honda. A potential threat posed by cattle grazing to downstream drinking water quality is the possible introduction of *Cryptosporidium* to the water supply. *Cryptosporidium* is a pathogenic protozoan that can cause intestinal infections which can cause illness and even fatality to children and other sensitive populations. *Cryptosporidium* is spread via hardy cysts, which are most often produced by newborn calves infected with the pathogen. Contamination of the water supply with even trace levels of cysts could trigger the need to install extremely costly water treatment procedures.

Many of the project site's natural features help reduce cattle access to Mindego Creek, including existing dense vegetation and steep topography. These natural features create an approximate 500-foot minimum buffer from the Mindego Creek watercourse. In addition, the proposed Grazing Plan includes several measures to keep cattle away from water sources, including strategic placement of water troughs and salt licks away from water bodies, as well as installation of exclusionary fencing.

Proposed active management and monitoring of the grazing land would also limit stormwater runoff rates and soil erosion, which further eliminate the potential for cysts to enter water courses. For example, MROSD would monitor vegetation response and forage utilization and distribution to ensure that grazing is adequately distributed throughout the property and that no single area is grazed too heavily. Please see Appendix B, for a description of the Rangeland-Habitat Health and Residual Dry Matter (RDM) monitoring program that would be implemented as part of the proposed U&M Plan.

To further minimize the potential for contamination of the Guild's water supply, the following measures are included in the proposed U&M Plan (See Section 3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality for more information):

- Cattle would be excluded from the Mindego Creek watershed via a system of fencing and existing natural barriers (dense vegetation and steep topography) during the period the Guild draws water from Mindego Creek . This period extends from September 1 through May 31 (except during the 2-day processing period; see below), encompassing the typical rainy season *as well as* a precautionary buffer. This measure will avoid the potential for pathogens which may be present in cattle excrement to be carried to Mindego Creek via rainwater runoff.
- Regular monitoring will be performed by MROSD staff and the grazing tenant during the rainy season to ensure that no cattle have entered the Mindego Creek watershed. Additional fencing will be installed wherever and whenever existing barriers are found to be ineffective.
- During processing, typically spanning a 2 day period in winter, cattle will be confined to a secure holding field and corral along the southern border of the Mindego Creek watershed. No cattle will be moved into the holding field or corral if or when precipitation (rain) occurs or is forecasted with greater than a 70 percent probability in the next 72-hour period to prevent fecal material from entering the water via surface runoff. The holding field and corral vicinity will be monitored regularly by District staff or other appointed personnel for signs of concentrated surface water flow (e.g., gullies and rills). If such signs are detected, the District will ensure that proper drainage improvements are installed to prevent concentrated flows from the area into the watershed.
- Cattle water troughs and salt/mineral supplement will be located at least 800 feet away from surface water bodies to disperse cattle and other wildlife away from wetland and riparian areas (see Exhibit 2-4).
- Supplemental feeding will not be allowed, except in the following circumstances: 1) Distribution of supplements (vitamins, minerals, protein) to aid in the achievement of District resource management goals, livestock health and livestock movement and 2) feeding in the corral/holding pen (when cattle are off loaded and held or shipped from the premises. Any hay should be locally sourced.
- Stocking rates identified in the Grazing Management Plan will be adjusted as necessary to maintain appropriate Residual Dry Matter (RDM) standards. Annual monitoring of RDM shall by conducted by the District rangeland ecologist.
- The District will continue to implement the feral pig reduction program, which has been effective in reducing the feral pig populations. (Note that feral pigs currently occur in the area and are also a potential source of *Cryptosporidium*. Reducing pig populations in the watershed reduces existing potential for contamination of the water supply, reduces the risk of disease transmission to domestic livestock, protects native vegetation and sensitive habitat areas and is a an overall benefit to the project.)

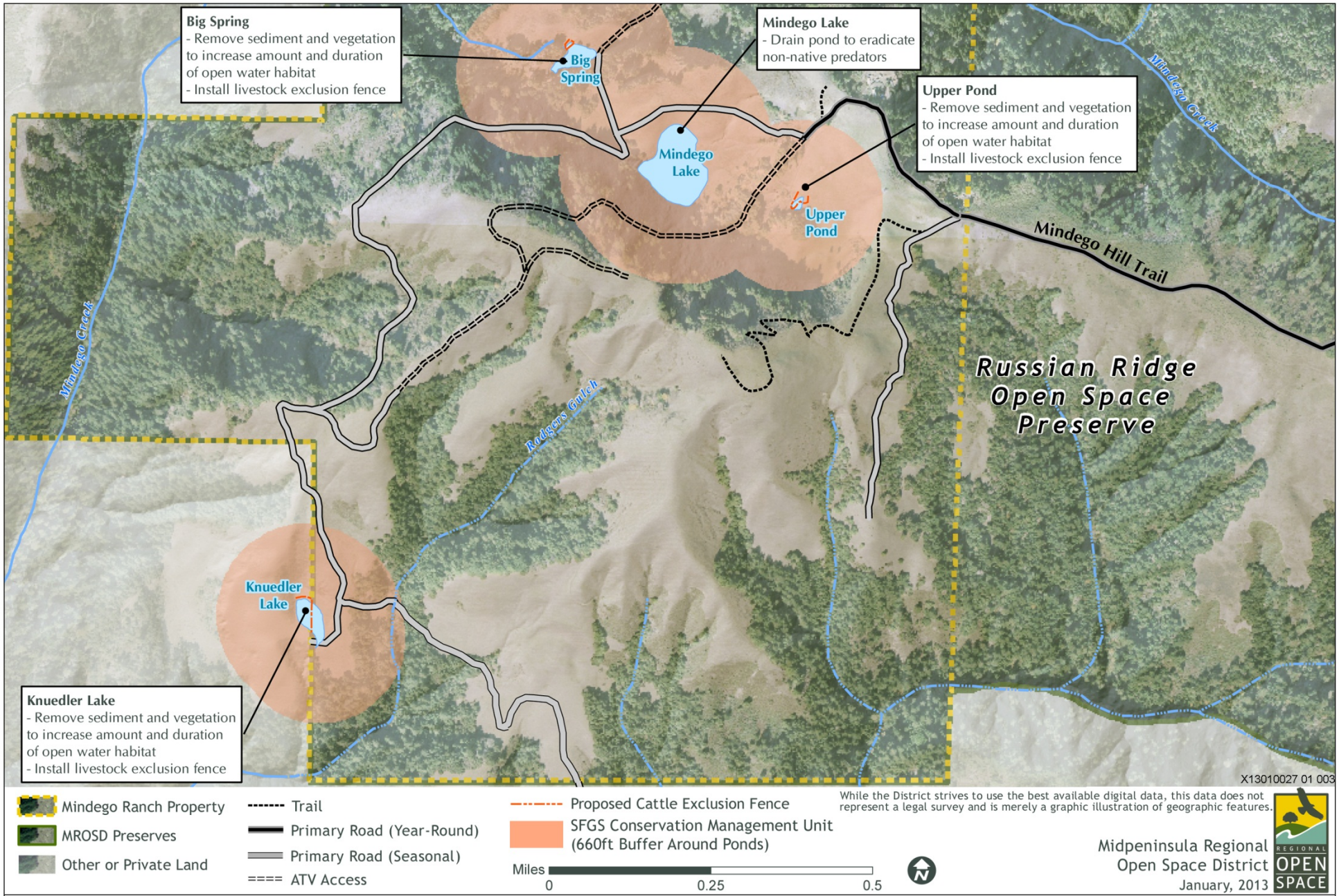

Exhibit 2-3

SFBS Habitat Enhancement

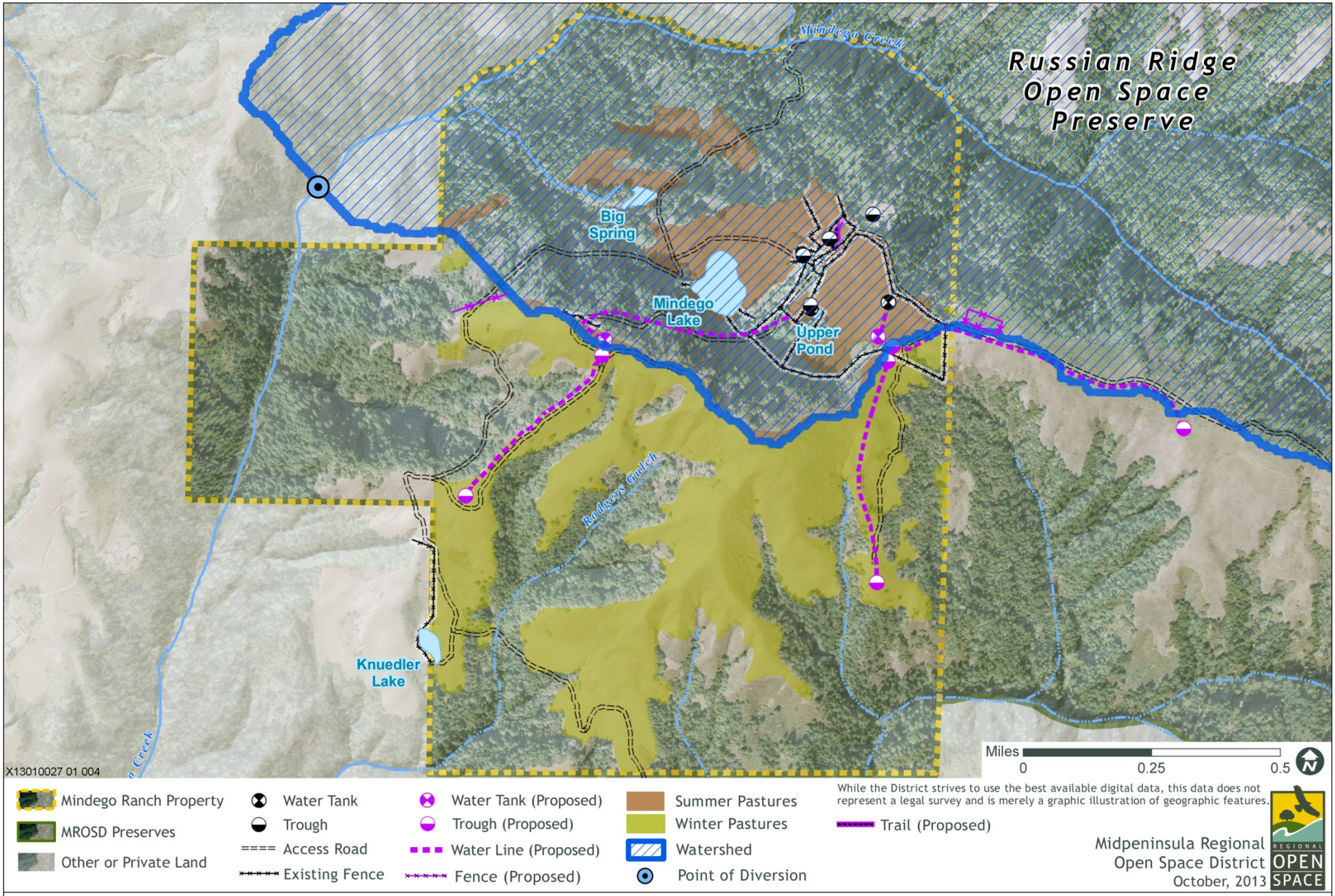

Exhibit 2-4

Grazing Infrastructure

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

2.5.3 PUBLIC ACCESS

To minimize potential impacts to the highly sensitive SFGS, protective guidelines would be established and public access on the property would be limited. The proposed U&M Plan would open access to an existing donor recognition circle, which includes the following specific actions (See Exhibit 2-5):

- opening a new section of the Mindego Ranch main driveway that connects to the POST Donor Circle pathway to hiking and equestrian use,
- opening the POST Donor Circle pathway to hiking only,
- installing a horse stile at the entrance of the Donor Circle pathway,
- designating habitat buffer areas around ponds as Conservation Management Units, where no public access is allowed,
- installing "Closed Area" signage at key locations,
- installing a new gate on the Mindego Ranch main driveway just beyond the junction with the Donor Circle pathway, and
- allowing for docent-led tours only within closed areas of Mindego Ranch.

2.5.4 MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION

Major maintenance and operations projects that would be implemented as part of the U&M Plan include road erosion treatment projects and removal of existing structures. Road erosion treatment projects, as prescribed by the Mindego Ranch Road and Trail Erosion Inventory (Best 2012), would include installing reverse-grade dips and ditch relief culverts, rocking low-lying segments, replacing a failing culvert along the Mindego Hill Trail, as well as re-grading, widening, and installing reverse-grade dips on three critical ranch access roads (See Exhibit 2-6).

The dilapidated structures described above, including the two ranch houses, barn and corral, would be demolished for safety reasons. (It should be noted that the District would remediate or cap soil contaminants in the corral area as part of structural demolition.)

Additional maintenance activities are included in the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Control Board Landfill Closure Site Management Measures (landfill closure, signage, restriction enforcement, and slope monitoring) and the POST Council Circle Management Agreement (trail maintenance actions, grazing responsibilities, and invasive species control). It is also important to note that the District has existing funding dedicated to future remediation of the corral area (a remediation plan has not yet been prepared), which would not be accessible to the public. No additional staffing would be required for operation of the proposed U&M Plan. The proposed project provides very limited additional public access and amenities and is therefore expected to generate few, if any, additional vehicle trips (i.e., no more than 2 trips per day).

2.5.5 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Project elements would be constructed as funding becomes available. Due to potential public health, safety concerns and the need for cost-effective habitat management, demolition of existing structures and installation of grazing infrastructure is anticipated to occur within the next one to two years. Other project components, such as pond and habitat enhancement, and public access, would likely occur within 2-to-10 years after project approval, depending on funding. Project construction would require few pieces of heavy construction equipment, mostly for demolition of structures and pond restoration. Fewer than 10 construction workers would typically be onsite at any given time.

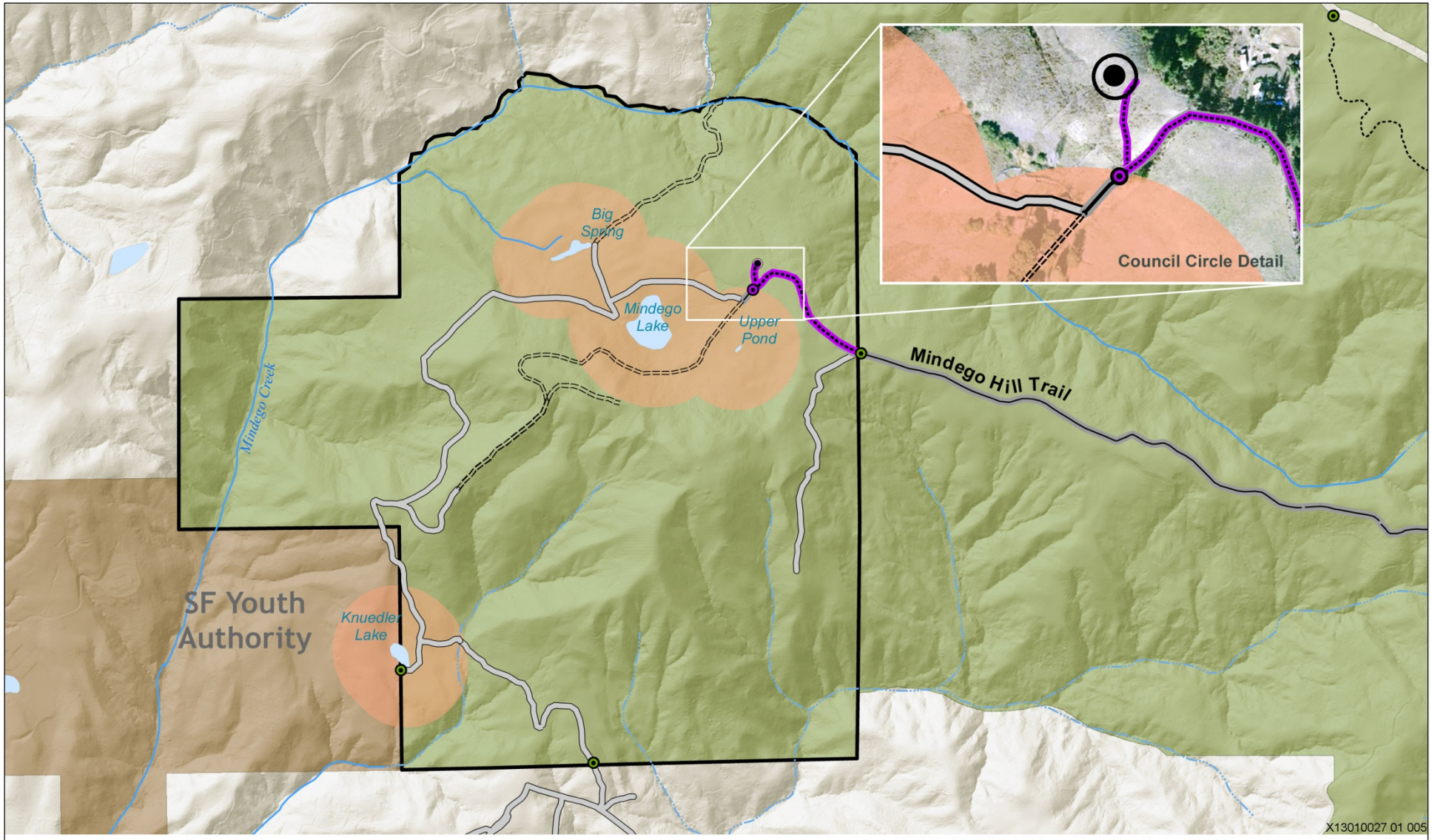

Exhibit 2-5

Public Access

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

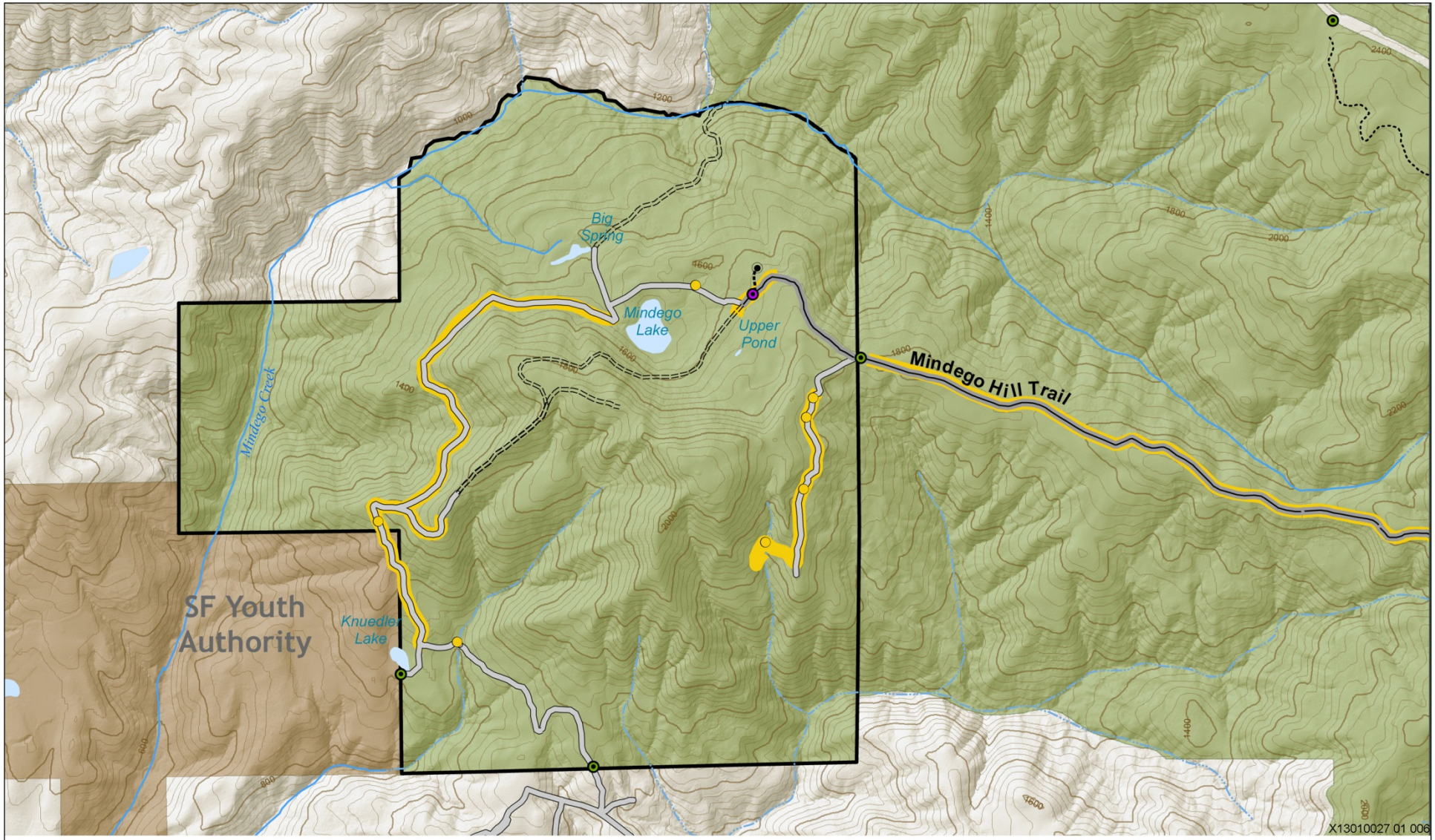

Exhibit 2-6

Road Maintenance

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3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION

1.	**Project Title:**	Mindego Ranch Use and Management Plan
2.	**Lead Agency Name and Address:**	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) 330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA 94022
3.	**Contact Person and Phone Number:**	Lisa Bankosh, 650 691-1200
4.	**Project Location:**	Unincorporated San Mateo County
5.	**Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**	Same as Lead Agency (MROSD)
6.	**General Plan Designation:**	San Mateo County: Open Space, Public Recreation, Timber Production
7.	**Zoning:**	San Mateo County: RM (Resource Management), RM-CZ/CD (Resource Management – Coastal Zone) and TPZ (Timberland Preserve Zone)

8. **Description of Project:** **(Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)**

   See attached project description.

9. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:** **(Briefly describe the project's surroundings)** The Preserve is surrounded primarily by open space, undeveloped private land, and rural residential uses. Please see attached project description.

10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** **(e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement)**
    - US Army Corps of Engineers (Section 404 Permit)
    - US Fish and Wildlife Service (Section 7 compliance)
    - California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Section 1602 and 2080.1 compliance)
    - Regional Water Quality Control Board (Section 401 cert.)
    - Bay Area Air Quality Management District (notification of demolition)
    - San Mateo County Demolition Permit, Grading and Resource Management Permit

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ **Aesthetics**	☐ **Agriculture and Forest Resources**	☐ **Air Quality**
☐ **Biological Resources**	☐ **Cultural Resources**	☐ **Geology / Soils**
☐ **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**	☐ **Hazards & Hazardous Materials**	☐ **Hydrology / Water Quality**
☐ **Land Use / Planning**	☐ **Mineral Resources**	☐ **Noise**
☐ **Population / Housing**	☐ **Public Services**	☐ **Recreation**
☐ **Transportation / Traffic**	☐ **Utilities / Service Systems**	☐ **Mandatory Findings of Significance**
		☒ **None With Mitigation**

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION,** including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Lisa Bankosh
Signature

11/21/2013
Date

LISA BANKOSH
Printed Name

PLANNER III
Title

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Agency

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.1 AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. Aesthetics. Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site has a high degree of visual quality. (See Exhibits 3.1-1 through 3.1-4) The rolling grassland interspersed with woodland, riparian vegetation, a creek, and several ponds contribute to the site's high scenic quality. The project site's visual character is also defined by the deteriorating rural residential structures, as well as the remnants of the former onsite cattle grazing operation (including a barn, corral, water tank, and troughs). The dilapidated onsite structures generally detract from the otherwise natural visual character. Note than none of the onsite structures meet the criteria for listing as historic resources. (See Section 3.5 Cultural Resources.)

Multiple scenic vistas are located throughout the project site. For example, the project site offers picturesque panoramas of the surrounding coastal landscape, especially from the top of Mindego Hill, which, on clear days, offers distant views of the Pacific Ocean. Most places on the project site offer views of rolling hillsides with dense vegetation in the valleys, as well as a few small ponds.

District policies included in the "Resource Management Policies" document (MROSD 2011) are intended to reduce District-wide visual impacts. Applicable Resource Management Policies include minimizing evidence of human impacts by minimizing visibility of infrastructure and maintaining significant natural landscapes by controlling vegetation to maintain scenic views and requiring tenants to maintain landscapes.

Nighttime views in the project area are very dark and generally free of light pollution. No sources of light or glare exist on the property.

Exhibit 3.1-1 View of Mindego Hill from the East Gate

Exhibit 3.1-2 Northwest View from the Top of Mindego Hill

Exhibit 3.1-3 View of Existing Onsite Water Tank with Off-Site Rolling Hills in the Background

Exhibit 3.1-4 View of Mindego Lake

3.1.2 DISCUSSION

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less-Than-Significant. Scenic vistas are available from several locations on the project site, especially on top of Mindego Hill. In addition, the high visual quality of the project site contributes to scenic vistas visible from offsite locations throughout the project area.

It should first be noted that the existing scenic vistas available at the project site are currently not available to the public. Implementation of the proposed U&M plan would provide public access to the site and its outstanding views. This is considered an environmental benefit of the proposed project.

Implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would involve minor physical modifications that would generally complement and fit in with the existing visual character of the site and surrounding property; these include demolition of existing deteriorating structures, and improvements to existing roadways, providing public access, installation of grazing facilities (water tanks and troughs), re-introduction of cattle onto the site, and restoration of existing ponds. These physical changes would typically not substantially affect existing scenic vistas (either onsite or offsite). This impact is *less than significant*.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project is not located within the vicinity of a state scenic highway. The San Mateo County General Plan designates Alpine Road as a scenic corridor. The project site (primarily Mindego Hill) is distantly visible from Alpine Road (over one mile away). Structures on the project site do not meet the eligibility criteria for listing as a significant historic resource. (See Section 3.5, Cultural Resources) The proposed project does not include development of any additional structures or construction of any features that would be clearly visible from Alpine Road. The proposed project would not result in tree removal or removal of rock outcroppings. Therefore, because the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources, the impact would be *less than significant*.

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less-Than-Significant. Mindego Hill trail, a new hiking and equestrian trail to the summit of Mindego Hill, was approved in 2011 as part of the Mindego Gateway project. Implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would provide additional hiking and equestrian access to a Donor Circle honoring those who contributed to the preservation of the property. No public vehicle access would be provided on the project site. Although more people would be visible hiking and riding horses on the site, the additional number of visitors would not be substantial and the publically accessible area on the site would be very limited (See Exhibit 2-5). Therefore, there would not be a substantial change to the existing visual setting.

In addition, re-introduction of cattle grazing on the project site, as well as the installation of minor facilities such as water tanks and troughs, would be consistent with the visual character of the site, which currently includes structures and features associated with the former cattle grazing operation.

Other improvements include habitat restoration, primarily associated with the onsite ponds. Although there would be short-term visual effects associated with the temporary draining of Mindego Lake (to eradicate invasive species), once the lake is refilled there would be no noticeable change to the visual character of the

onsite pond. Other habitat restoration activities would reduce sedimentation in the ponds, which would enhance their appearance by enlarging the visible area of water.

Considering all of the above, the proposed project would not result in substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site. This would be a *less-than-significant* impact.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact. The proposed project would not include any new structures or other sources of light or glare. Public access would not be allowed after daylight hours. The project would result in *no impact*.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest Resources.				
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mindego Ranch was used for cattle ranching from 1859, when Juan Mendico settled in the area with ranch and residential infrastructure located northeast of Mindego Lake, until 2008 when the property ownership transitioned to the District. The ranch contains approximately 330 acres of grassland that are available for cattle grazing where accessible along ridges, swales and foothill sideslopes.

As of 2010, no areas of the project site were mapped as Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance, Unique Farmland or Prime Farmland by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The project site does not contain any designated "Farmland" per the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The FMMP designates the land within Preserve boundaries as either "Grazing Land" or "Other Land." (Department of Conservation 2010) The Coastal Protection Program EIR included a measure to amend the Coastal Service Plan's definition of "prime agricultural land" to include "land which supports livestock for the production of food and fiber and which has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture" (MROSD 2002). Grazing land within the project site has an annual carrying capacity of less than one animal unit per acre (Sage Associates 2012) and therefore does not meet the aforementioned criteria. No Prime Farmland exists on the project site.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965—commonly referred to as the Williamson Act (WA)—enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than similarly situated properties because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. Local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the state via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971. The easterly 887 acres of the project site are currently under WA contracts. The District requested non-renewal of these contracts in 2009, but they will remain in effect throughout the nine-year non-renewal period (until December 31, 2018).

Existing District policies ensure that the District sustains and encourages agricultural viability while minimizing impacts on the natural environment. Agricultural practices on District lands are guided by the Resource Management Policies (MROSD 2011) as well as the Coastal Service Plan (MROSD 2003). Resource Management Policies include guidelines to ensure that grazing supports and is compatible with wildlife and wildlife habitat. These guidelines include requirements such as inventory and conservation of sensitive habitats, preparation of site-specific grazing management plans including water quality BMPs, and protection of riparian and aquatic habitats. The Coastal Service Plan includes several guidelines that direct District purchase of and agricultural practices on farmland, as well as guidelines to protect farmland by requiring buffers for development and trails near farmland (where trail use has negative impacts on farming operations). Finally, as part of the Coastal Protection Program, the District entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the San Mateo County Farm Bureau that ensures that all District actions on the Coastside which may impact agricultural operations are vetted by local farmers and ranchers.

3.2.2 DISCUSSION

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Less-Than-Significant. The FMMP identifies "grazing land" and "other land" on the project site. No Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance occurs on the project site (Department of Conservation 2010). No agricultural uses exist on the project site. Implementation of the proposed project

would reintroduce the grazing and ranching operations on approximately 330 acres of project site grassland. Although the proposed project limited public access, project implementation would expand agricultural use in the region by increasing available grazing land. The proposed project would also be consistent with the District's Resource Management Policies and the Coastal Service Plan, as described above in the Environmental Setting. The proposed project includes no new trails. The project's impact to the conversion of Prime, Unique, or Farmland of statewide importance would be *less than significant*.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

Less-Than-Significant. The San Mateo County General Plan Land Use map indicated that the project site is zoned RM (Resource Management) and TPZ (Timberland Preserve Zone). These zoning designations provide for park, open space and recreational uses. Thus, the proposed enhancement of habitat, reintroduction of small-scale grazing, and opening limited areas of the site to public use and providing minor public access improvements are consistent with the current zoning.

Implementation of the proposed project would reintroduce grazing on the property while integrating limited public access. Grazing and ranching are considered allowable agricultural uses under the Williamson Act. Compatible uses under the WA, as amended, also include "Open Space Use" and "Recreational Use." "Recreational Use" is defined under Government Code 51201(n) under the WA as the use of land in its agricultural or natural state by the public, with or without change, for any of the following: walking, hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, or other outdoor games or sports for which facilities are provided for public participation. "Open Space Use" in San Mateo County is defined as the use or maintenance of land in a manner that preserves its natural characteristics, beauty, or openness for the benefit and enjoyment of the public within a:

- state-designated scenic highway corridor, which includes all lands adjacent to and visible from State Hwy 35 from the Santa Cruz County Line to State Route 92;
- wildlife habitat area, defined as a land or water area designated by the Board of Supervisors after consulting with and considering the recommendation from the Department of Fish and Game, as an area of great importance for the protection or enhancement of the wildlife resources of the state; or
- managed wetlands area, defined as an area diked off from the ocean or any bay, river, or stream to which water is occasionally admitted, and which, for at least three consecutive years immediately prior to being placed within an agricultural preserve pursuant to this chapter, was used and maintained as waterfowl hunting preserve or game refuge or for agricultural purposes.

The District's mission to preserve, protect, and maintain lands as open space and to support agricultural uses within the Coastside Protection Area essentially meets the intent and purpose of the WA. Because the District is a tax-exempt public agency whose mission is to preserve open space, the WA is not necessary to achieve land conservation objectives on District lands. For these reasons, the District has filed notices of non-renewal with San Mateo County for lands within the Preserve that are under WA contracts. Non-renewal is the preferred administrative method of terminating a contract on a parcel of land; the entire non-renewal process requires a nine-year wind down period. Non-renewal of the WA contracts is an administrative procedure that will not affect the agricultural use that is currently present on the project site. Consistent with the District's mission, agricultural lands will remain protected after non-renewal.

The proposed project includes allowing access on existing trails that would facilitate open space and low intensity recreational uses, both of which are compatible with proposed cattle grazing in grassland areas of the property. This mixed use of open space is new to the District but has been successfully operated within San Mateo County and the San Francisco Bay region. Existing WA contracts were amended by San Mateo County in September 2012 to allow compatible open space uses on the project site (San Mateo County 2012). Therefore,

the project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact associated with conflicts with WA contracts. This is consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

No Impact. As mentioned above under "b," areas of the Preserve are zoned TPZ, which in addition to preserving timberland, also allows park, open space, and recreational uses. The proposed project would not require a rezone. Therefore, the project would result in *no impact* related to conflicts with the zoning of forest land or timberland. This is consistent with the conclusion of the San Mateo Coastal Protection Program EIR.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Less-Than-Significant. Implementation of the proposed project does not include development of new structures or facilities that would require substantial tree removal. As mentioned under "b" and "c" above, park, open space, and recreational uses are consistent with the TPZ zone. The District's Service Plan includes policies to avoid physical impacts to existing forest preserves, including establishing buffers. The proposed project does not include public access within or near the TPZ area (located only on the westernmost area of the project site); therefore, no buffers are necessary Implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact. This is consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would not involve other changes that could result in conversion of farmland or forest land to non-agricultural or non-forest use. As described in the discussions under "a" through "d" above, implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would result in *no impact* related to conversion of agricultural or forest land. This is consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.				
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is located in San Mateo County, which lies in the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (SFBAAB) and is under the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). With respect to ozone, San Mateo County is currently designated as a nonattainment area for the 1-hour state ambient air quality standard and the 8-hour state and national ambient air quality standards (ARB 2010). San Mateo County is designated as unclassified for the national standard for respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM_{10}) and as nonattainment for the state standard for PM_{10}; and is designated as nonattainment for the state and national standards for fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less ($PM_{2.5}$) (ARB 2011).

Air quality within San Mateo County is regulated by such agencies as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and California Air Resources Board (ARB) at the federal and state levels, respectively, and locally by the BAAQMD. The BAAQMD seeks to improve air quality conditions through a comprehensive program of planning, regulation, enforcement, technical innovation, and promotion of the understanding of air quality issues. The clean air strategy of the BAAQMD consists of the development of programs for the attainment of ambient air quality standards, adoption and enforcement of rules and regulations, and issuance of permits for stationary sources. BAAQMD also inspects stationary sources, responds to citizen complaints, monitors ambient air quality and meteorological conditions, and implements other programs and regulations required by the federal Clean Air Act, federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, and the California Clean Air Act.

The BAAQMD prepared the Draft Bay Area 2010 Clean Air Plan, which defines a strategy to: (1) reduce emissions and decrease ambient concentrations of harmful pollutants; (2) safeguard public health by reducing exposure to air pollutants that pose the greatest health risk, with an emphasis on protecting the communities most heavily impacted by air pollution; and (3) reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to protect the climate (BAAQMD 2010). In compliance with the requirements set forth in the California Clean Air Act, the plan specifically addresses the nonattainment status for ozone and to a lesser extent, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$.

BAAQMD adopted new thresholds of significance and guidance for the evaluation of projects under CEQA in early June of 2010 (BAAQMD 2010). These documents provide detailed guidance for evaluating both short-term construction activities and the long-term operations of new facilities. The BAAQMD adopted the following quantitative thresholds of significance for the evaluation of criteria air pollutants (CAPs) and precursors generated by construction and operational activities:

- Average daily emissions of 54 pounds per day (lb/day) of reactive organic gases (ROG),
- Average daily emissions of 54 lb/day of oxides of nitrogen (NO_X),
- Average daily emissions of 82 lb/day of PM_{10} exhaust,
- Average daily emissions of 54 lb/day of $PM_{2.5}$ exhaust,
- An incremental increase in the annual average concentration of $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations greater than 0.3 micrograms per cubic meter, and
- Fugitive PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ dust with implementation of best management practices for dust control.

Note that BAAQMD defines sensitive receptors as “facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollutants. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, and residential areas are examples of sensitive receptors” (BAAQMD 2010). Although not specifically stated in the BAAQMD definition, people who are active outdoors are considered by the EPA to be sensitive to criteria air pollutants, such as ozone, and would fall under the “others” category in the BAAQMD definition (EPA 2012).

It should also be noted that the Coastal Service Plan includes Implementation Action G.6J(i) to reduce fugitive dust emissions. Because it would be subject to the requirements of the Service Plan, the proposed project would be required to implement this action.

3.3.2 DISCUSSION

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No Impact. The proposed project is consistent with the County’s land use designation and zoning, does not include any development of structures, and includes no additional staff. The proposed project would not change the amount of development projected in the San Mateo County General Plan, and would therefore be consistent with the population growth and VMT projections for the SFBAAB contained in BAAQMD’s Clean Air Plan (which is based on general plan projections) and thus would not interfere with the region’s ability to attain or maintain state and national ambient air quality standards. Also, the proposed project would not result in the operation of any major stationary emission sources or extensive, ongoing use of heavy-duty off-road equipment. Thus, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any air quality planning efforts. As a result, there would be *no impact*. No mitigation is required. This is consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR.

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would result in minor construction activities, such as demolition of the onsite structures already in poor condition, some removal of sediment and vegetation from ponds, and road improvements. The use of heavy duty equipment would be minimal and would be limited to the demolition of onsite structures and light earth movement for road and pond improvements. Therefore, emissions of criteria air pollutants (e.g., NO_X, ROG, and Diesel PM) would be minimal and project construction activities would not result in emissions of criteria air pollutants that could exceed applicable BAAQMD emissions thresholds. Emissions of criteria air pollutants are not discussed further. Emissions of fugitive dust (i.e., PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) would be of primary concern and therefore is the focus of this analysis.

The Coastal Protection Program EIR evaluated potential impacts to air quality due to implementation of the Service Plan, within which Mindego Ranch is included. Impact AIR-1 indicates that typical construction activities associated with grading for access roads and parking areas, as well as demolition activities, could result in generation of fugitive dust, including PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. The Coastal Protection Program EIR also indicates that asbestos could be generated by demolition activities, but that long-term emissions associated with implementation of the Service Plan would not be significant due to the minor use levels of the open space facilities. Mitigation Measure AIR-1 in the Coastal Protection Program EIR includes standard fugitive dust control best management practices (BMPs), including watering construction areas, covering haul trucks, daily sweeping, and hydroseeding inactive construction areas. The proposed project includes activities generally consistent with the activities described in the Coastal Protection Program EIR. Consistent with the EIR's conclusion, implementation of the proposed project could result in a *potentially significant impact* if standard fugitive dust control measures are not implemented.

Mitigation Measure 3.3-1

The District shall require all its construction contractors to implement the following basic construction mitigation measures. This measure incorporates Mitigation Measure AIR-1 of the Coastal Protection Program EIR. (The measures below provide updated consistency with BAAQMD regulations.)

Basic Construction Mitigation Measures

- *All exposed and un-compacted surfaces (e.g., staging areas, soil piles, and graded areas,) shall either be watered two times per day or covered with mulch, straw, or other dust control cover.*
- *All haul trucks transporting soil, sand, or other loose material off-site shall be covered.*
- *All visible mud or dirt track-out onto adjacent public roads shall be collected and removed at least once per day. The use of dry power sweeping is prohibited.*
- *All vehicle speeds on unpaved roads shall be limited to 15 miles per hour (mph).*
- *All roadways, driveways, and sidewalks to be paved shall be completed as soon as possible. Building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding, dust control covers, or soil binders are used.*
- *Idling times shall be minimized either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the maximum idling time to 5 minutes (as required by the California airborne toxics control measures*

(ATCM) Title 13, Section 2485 of California Code of Regulations). Clear signage shall be provided for construction workers at all access points.

- *All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. All equipment shall be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition prior to operation.*

- *Post a publicly visible sign with the telephone number and person to contact at the Lead Agency regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. BAAQMD's phone number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.*

Significance after Mitigation

The dust control measures in Mitigation Measure 3.3-1 would result in reductions in both fugitive emissions of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5.}$ Although the exact amount of the reduction cannot be quantified, individual dust control measures have been shown to reduce fugitive dust by anywhere from 30% to more than 90% and, in the aggregate, best management practices would substantially reduce fugitive dust emissions from construction sites (BAAQMD 2010, p. D-47). BAAQMD would consider fugitive PM emissions to be reduced to a *less-than-significant* level with implementation of the dust control measures in Mitigation Measure 3.3-1.

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

Less-Than-Significant. The SFBAAB is currently designated as a nonattainment area for state and national ozone standards and nonattainment for the state PM_{10} standards and state and national $PM_{2.5}$ standards. SFBAAB's nonattainment status is attributed to the region's development history. Past, present and future development projects contribute to the region's adverse air quality impacts on a cumulative basis. By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. No single project is sufficient in size to, by itself, result in nonattainment of ambient air quality standards. Instead, a project's individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts. As explained in BAAQMD's CEQA Guidelines, and consistent with CEQA, if a project's contribution to the cumulative impact is considerable, then the project's impact on air quality would be considered significant (BAAQMD 2010).

In developing thresholds of significance for air pollutants, BAAQMD considered the emission levels for which a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. If a project exceeds the identified significance thresholds, its emissions would be cumulatively considerable, resulting in significant adverse air quality impacts to the region's existing air quality conditions. Therefore, additional analysis to assess cumulative impacts is unnecessary.

As discussed in the analysis under item "b" above, the Coastal Protection Program EIR indicates that, with implementation of dust control measures, project-generated emissions would not exceed applicable thresholds. Therefore, the proposed would not violate or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Project-generated emissions of criteria air pollutants and precursors would not be cumulatively considerable. This would be a *less-than-significant* impact with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Criteria air pollutants and precursors; diesel particulate matter emissions; and naturally occurring asbestos are discussed separately below.

CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS AND PRECURSORS

Less-Than-Significant. The surrounding land uses consist of primarily of rural residences and undeveloped open space land (the Camp Glenwood property, which serves as a male youth correctional facility, is adjacent to the southwest corner of the site). Implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would potentially introduce people participating in physical activity (i.e. hiking and bicycling), which are considered to be sensitive receptors in this analysis, to air pollutants during construction activities. However, it is District standard practice to restrict public access near construction zones. Furthermore, as discussed in b) above, project-related construction and operations would not result in emissions of criteria pollutants or local carbon monoxide emissions that would result in or contribute substantially to an air quality violation. Fugitive dust emissions associated with construction-related ground disturbance would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1. Emissions-generating construction activity would occur at different locations on the Preserve and not continue at any single location for an extended period. The majority of operational emissions would be from vehicles traveling to and from the project site, which would not result in localized concentrations of any CAPs. Therefore, project-related emissions would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of CAPs.

DIESEL PARTICULATE MATTER

Less-Than-Significant. Construction-related activities would result in temporary, short-term emissions of diesel PM from the exhaust of off-road heavy-duty diesel equipment used for site preparation (e.g., demolition, grading, excavation, grading, and clearing); paving; trucks delivering and removing materials from construction sites; and other miscellaneous activities. According to ARB, the potential cancer risk from the inhalation of diesel PM is a more serious risk than the potential non-cancer health impacts (ARB 2003). Consequently, for the purposes of this analysis, the discussion below focuses on cancer rather than non-cancer risks.

The dose to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk (i.e., potential exposure to TAC emission levels that exceed applicable standards). Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the duration of exposure to the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that a longer exposure period would result in a higher level of exposure to the exposed individual. In other words, the risks estimated for an exposed individual are higher if a fixed exposure occurs over a longer period. According to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Health Risk Assessments, which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to TAC emissions, should be based on a 70-year exposure period; however, such assessments should be limited to the duration of exposure (OEHHA 2001). The use of mobilized equipment for construction activities would be temporary at any one location, and would dissipate with increasing distance from the source. In addition, the nearest sensitive receptor is located approximately 1,500 feet to the south of the nearest potential construction site, which would allow for ample dissipation of particulates. As mentioned above, with implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-1, average daily emissions of $PM_{2.5}$ exhaust would not exceed BAAQMD's threshold of significance. For these reasons, and because of the highly dispersive properties of diesel PM (Zhu et. al. 2002), short-term construction-generated TAC emissions would not expose sensitive receptors to an incremental increase in cancer risk that exceeds 10 in one million or a Hazard Index greater than 1.0 of the maximally exposed individual; or result in an incremental increase in the annual average concentration of $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations greater than 0.3 micrograms per cubic meter. This impact would be *less than significant*.

NATURALLY OCCURRING ASBESTOS

No Impact. Naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) was identified as a TAC in 1986 by ARB. NOA is located in many parts of California, including the Bay Area, and is commonly associated with ultramafic rocks, according to a special publication published by the California Department of Conservation, which is now named the California

Geological Survey (California Department of Conservation 2002). Asbestos is the common name for a group of naturally occurring fibrous silicate minerals that can separate into thin but strong and durable fibers. Ultramafic rocks form in high-temperature environments well below the surface of the earth. By the time they are exposed at the surface by geologic uplift and erosion, ultramafic rocks may be partially to completely altered into a type of metamorphic rock called serpentinite. Sometimes the metamorphic conditions are right for the formation of chrysotile asbestos or tremolite-actinolite asbestos in the bodies of these rocks, along their boundaries, or in the soil. Exposure to asbestos may result in inhalation or ingestion of asbestos fibers, which over time may result in damage to the lungs or membranes that cover the lungs, leading to illness or even death.

According to the *General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California—Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos* and the Geologic Map of the San Francisco-San Jose Quadrangle, the project site is not located in areas that are more likely to contain NOA (California Department of Conservation 2000; California Geological Survey 2007). Therefore, any ground disturbance activity associated with project-related construction or operations would not to result in the reentrainment of NOA-containing dust. There would be *no impact*.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

Less-Than-Significant. The occurrence and severity of odor impacts depend on numerous factors, including the nature, frequency, and intensity of the source; wind speed and direction; and the presence of sensitive receptors. Although offensive odors rarely cause any physical harm, they still can be very unpleasant, leading to considerable distress and often generating citizen complaints to local governments and regulatory agencies.

BAAQMD has established Regulation 7 (Odorous Emissions) to address odor issues. Regulation 7 places general limitations on odorous substances and specific emission limitations on certain odorous compounds. Project implementation would not result in any major sources of odor and the project type is not one of the common types of facilities or activities that are known to produce odors (e.g., landfill, coffee roaster, wastewater treatment facility). In addition, the diesel exhaust from the use of heavy-duty equipment during construction and demolition activities would be intermittent and temporary, and would dissipate rapidly from the source with an increase in distance. Also, construction activity would not occur at any single location for an extended period of time. There are no portable restrooms or pit toilet restrooms included in the proposed recreational facilities. Therefore, project implementation would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. As a result, this impact would be *less than significant*.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources. Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mindego Ranch supports a mosaic of upland plant communities within four general habitat types, including grassland, coyote brush scrub, mixed evergreen forest, and developed/ruderal. Two perennial streams (Mindego and Alpine Creeks) and one intermittent stream (Rodgers Gulch) traverse the property. Year-round open water and seasonal wetlands are found on the property, including Upper Pond, Big Spring, and Kneudler and Mindego Lakes. Numerous other seeps and springs are present.

The grassland is dominated by non-native grasses and forbs including yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), wild oats (*Avena* sp.), wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*), barley (*Hordeum murinum*), sheep sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), hedgehog dogtail (*Cynosurus echinatus*), summer mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), and Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), with occasional

native species including California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), slender tarweed (*Madia gracilis*), blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*), purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), and soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*).

Coyote brush scrub is dominated by coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), with native shrubs and herbs present including poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*), sticky monkey flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), California coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*).

Mixed evergreen forest is dominated by a canopy of native trees including Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*), tanoak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), and madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*). The understory consists of native shrubs and herbs including poison oak, California hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta* var. *californica*), California blackberry, wood rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*), toyon, oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), wood fern, Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), trailplant (*Adenocaulon bicolor*), and swordfern (*Polystichum munitum*).

Developed/ruderal habitat consists of areas developed by roads, residences, and other structures, along with ruderal (highly disturbed) areas dominated by weedy, non-native grasses and forbs. This habitat is associated with the dirt road system, and the abandoned residence, ranch buildings and corrals near Mindego Lake.

Mindego Lake covers approximately 5.4 acres and is composed primarily of open water, due to water depths greater than four feet throughout most of the lake. Herbaceous wetland vegetation dominated by a mixture of native and non-native species grows in shallow areas along the lake fringe. Native species include spreading rush (*Juncus patens*), iris-leafed rush (*J. xiphioides*), spikerush (*Eleocharis macrostachya*), tall flatsedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*), cocklebur (Xanthium sp.), and water cress (*Nasturtium officinale*). Non-native species include curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), rabbits-foot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*), prickly sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*), and mint (*Mentha* sp.). Small stands of willow (*Salix* sp.) grow along the southern perimeter of the lake near the water line. A seep wetland, dominated by spike rush, water cress, and curly dock, feeds into the lake from the east. Uplands around the northern portion of the lake are heavily disturbed and dominated by ruderal, non-native herbaceous species including milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*) and Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*).

Knuedler Lake covers approximately 1.15 acres, with the majority of the lake composed of a dense cover of emergent wetland vegetation dominated by California bulrush (*Schoenoplectus californicus*), bur-reed (*Sparganium eurycarpum*), and cattail. The periphery of the lake is dominated by a mixture of native and non-native herbaceous wetland species including spikerush, water cress, tall flatsedge, soft rush, curly dock, rabbits-foot grass, and mint. A seep wetland dominated by spikerush and mint occurs on a slope above the southeastern portion of the lake.

Big Spring covers approximately 1 acre and is composed of a multilayered canopy of willow, white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), and wax myrtle (*Morella californica*), with a dense herbaceous understory of cattail (*Typha* sp.), bulrush, water cress, soft rush, and stinging nettle. Native tree and shrub species, including coast live oak, California bay, California hazelnut, coyote brush, poison oak, and California blackberry grow around the pond fringe.

Upper Pond covers approximately 0.15 acre and is composed of a dense cover of herbaceous wetland vegetation dominated by native species, such as bulrush, water cress, and soft rush. Several willows form an emergent tree canopy above the dense herbaceous wetland vegetation. A berm surrounding the pond is densely covered with non-native species such as poison hemlock, along with native species such as coyote brush, poison oak, stinging nettle, and California blackberry.

DISCUSSION

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Twelve special-status wildlife species have potential to occur on the property (Appendix C): California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), San Francisco garter snake *(Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos),* white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), Vaux's swift (*Chaetura vauxi*), olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*), grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum),* pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes annectens),* and American badger (*Taxidea taxus).*

District botanists and CNPS have conducted non-protocol surveys of the project site. No special-status plants have been observed during previous field surveys of portions of the ranch (Bankosh pers. comm. 2013), but the entire project site has not be surveyed during the appropriate blooming periods and suitable habitat is present.

Special-Status Amphibians and Reptiles

San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle are known to occur within the project site. San Francisco garter snake is "Fully Protected" under the Fish and Wildlife Code and is also protected by the California and federal Endangered Species Acts. San Francisco garter snake use ponds that support California red-legged frog, which is a prey species for the snake. Critical habitat has not been designated for San Francisco garter snake. San Francisco garter snake is found only on the San Francisco peninsula in San Mateo County and the northern portion of Santa Cruz County. Mindego Ranch is situated near the center of historic its range, but the species was not known to be extant at the project site until 1986 when they were first identified at Mindego Lake and Knuedler Lake (Biosearch Associates 2012, included as Appendix A of this IS/MND) In May 2010, an adult San Francisco garter snake was seen basking at Upper Pond, and many subsequent observations were made during development of a SFGS Habitat Management Plan for the property (Biosearch Associates 2012).

California red-legged frog is federally listed as threatened and considered a species of special concern by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). For successful reproduction, this species requires deep pools in slow-moving streams or ponds with riparian and/or emergent marsh vegetation. The entire project site is federally designated critical habitat for California red-legged frog (Unit SNM-2). Western pond turtles, which are considered a species of special concern by CDFW, require still or slow-moving water with instream emergent woody debris, rocks, or other similar features for basking sites. Pond turtle nests are typically located on unshaded upland slopes in dry substrates with clay or silt soils.

Implementation of the Use and Management Plan is intended to improve habitat conditions for San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle by removing predatory fish and reducing the population of bullfrog, both of which compete and prey upon native frogs and snakes.

Mindego Ranch provides a conservation opportunity as identified in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Recovery Plans for San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog. The primary goal of the San Francisco Garter Snake Recovery Plan is the protection of 10 significant populations (>200 individuals). Only six populations were known at the time the Recovery Plan was prepared (i.e., West-of-Bayshore, Crystal Springs & San Andreas Reservoirs, Laguna Salada/Mori Point, Pescadero Marsh, and Año Nuevo State Reserve). Creation or protection of significant populations at four additional sites was considered necessary to the recovery of the subspecies. The transfer of Mindego Ranch from private ownership to the District provided an opportunity to

protect and enhance ~1,000 acres with at least two ponds that support populations of the San Francisco garter snake. The proposed project site also represents the only population from the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains that is currently afforded protection. (Biosearch Associates 2012)

Enhancement of essential habitats at Mindego Ranch for the San Francisco garter snake will contribute to the regional recovery of the species and can promote genetic exchange with nearby populations on the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Viable San Francisco garter snake populations at Mindego Ranch will also increase the potential for dispersing San Francisco garter snake to colonize new locations both east and west of the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The habitat enhancement actions were designed to benefit the SFGS and would be implemented under an endangered species recovery or enhancement permit issued by the USFWS.

Habitat improvements at Mindego Lake are expected to contribute to the recovery of California red-legged frog by removing predatory species that severely reduce successful California red-legged frog breeding at the site. It is likely that California red-legged frog continue to deposit eggs into Mindego Lake, resulting in the potential for a population sink. The removal of predatory fish from Mindego Lake is expected to directly benefit the local California red-legged frog population by allowing for increased survivorship of eggs and metamorphs. Habitat improvements at Big Spring and Upper Pond are expected to result in conditions suitable for California red-legged frog breeding, whereas current conditions are not suitable Furthermore, core habitat areas for these species would be designated as Conservation Management Units (CMUs), which would be managed for resource protection rather than public recreation (See Appendix A); no public access would be permitted within the CMUs. “Closed Area” signage would be installed at key locations. Re-introducing grazing on the property would help maintain appropriate grassland habitat for SFGS, and strategic locations of proposed water infrastructure and fencing would help protect SFGS breeding habitat.

While the habitat enhancement activities are anticipated to benefit these species in the long term, the potential exists for short term impacts to occur during the draining of aquatic habitat and removal of excess sediment and vegetation. Individual San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle may accidentally be injured by construction equipment, smothered during sediment removal, or stranded during dewatering. This impact is considered *significant*.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-1

The District shall implement the following measures to avoid and minimize impacts to San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, and western pond turtle. This measure incorporates Mitigation Measures BIO 1b, 1j, and 1l of the Coastal Protection Program EIR. (The measures below provide specificity to protections for San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog and western pond turtle for habitat enhancement actions.)

- *Because San Francisco garter snake is Fully Protected, no take can be authorized under the Fish and Wildlife Code. Take is defined in Section 86 of the Fish and Wildlife Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." Habitat enhancement activities must ensure that no snakes are taken during implementation.*

- *Because San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog are federally protected and habitat enhancement activities may affect them, USFWS shall be consulted as required by the Endangered Species Act. Because potential impacts to aquatic habitat may also require a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (see Discussion under “C” below and Mitigation Measure BIO 4), consultation with USFWS would occur during the recovery permit process (under Section 10 of the ESA).*

- *The District shall implement all conservation measures included in the Biological Opinion issued by USFWS as a result of the consultation to minimize potential impacts to San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog.*

- *Conservation measures shall include:*

    - *Speed Limits. Use of vehicles on Mindego Ranch should be strictly controlled by the District to avoid potential take of San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog. Other than emergencies, access should be limited to necessary patrols and authorized persons that follow a 5-mph speed limit within 2,000 feet of Mindego Lake, Knuedler Lake, Upper Pond or Big Spring.*

    - *Worker Education Seminar. Prior to conducting any action that may negatively affect listed species, all staff, contractors and persons associated with the project must attended a worker-education seminar delivered by a qualified District biologist or other qualified biologist. The seminar will include written information regarding identification, natural history, legal status, onsite observations, and related information. Names and phone numbers of the biological monitors and CDFW and USFWS contacts should be included in the written information. The District should maintain a signature sheet to document compliance, which will be made available upon request.*

    - *Pre-activity Surveys. Prior to ground disturbing actions, pre-activity surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to search for San Francisco garter snake during periods when they are active, and to minimize affecting potential San Francisco garter snake cover-sites and hibernacula during all times of the year.*

    - *Biological Construction Monitoring. A qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-activity survey for San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog and western pond turtle prior to implementing actions that include ground disturbance or other activities that could otherwise harm either species. The biological monitor shall oversee compliance with this plan and all associated permits and should be the point of contact for regulatory agencies, if needed. If protected species are observed within the study area by anyone involved in the project, work shall cease and the animal will be allowed to move out of the area under its own motivation, and under the direct observation of the biological monitor (if feasible). If a western pond turtle nest is discovered, CDFW will be contacted for guidance to protect such a unique resource. Relocation of any protected species to the nearest appropriate habitat will not be conducted, unless specifically authorized by the regulatory agencies.*

Special-Status Mammals

If present within onsite structures, roosting habitat for pallid bats, which may roost in buildings or other structures that provide suitable thermal protection, may be affected during demolition of the ranch houses and barn on the project site. San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat and American badger have been detected in the project vicinity (Biosearch Associates and Coast Range Biological 2011). They both are considered species of special concern by CDFW. Construction of road repairs and erosion control, as well as installation of water infrastructure to support conservation grazing could result in disturbance to woodrat houses or badger dens if they are present in the work areas. This is considered a *significant* effect.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-2

Prior to demolition of structures, surveys for roosting bats within the structures will be conducted by a qualified biologist. Surveys will consist of a daytime pedestrian survey looking for evidence of bat use (e.g., guano) and/or an evening emergence survey to note the presence or absence of bats. The type of survey will depend

on the condition of the buildings. If no bat roosts are found, then no further study is required. If evidence of bat use is observed, the number and species of bats using the roost will be determined. Bat detectors may be used to supplement survey efforts, but are not required.

If roosts of pallid bats are determined to be present and must be removed, the bats will be excluded from the roosting site before the structure is removed. A program addressing compensation, exclusion methods, and roost removal procedures will be developed in consultation with DFG before implementation. Exclusion methods may include use of one-way doors at roost entrances (bats may leave but not reenter), or sealing roost entrances when the site can be confirmed to contain no bats. Exclusion efforts may be restricted during periods of sensitive activity (e.g., during hibernation or while females in maternity colonies are nursing young). The loss of each roost (if any) will be replaced in consultation with DFG and may include construction and installation of bat boxes suitable to the bat species and colony size excluded from the original roosting site. Roost replacement will be implemented before bats are excluded from the original roost sites. MROSD has successfully constructed bat boxes elsewhere that have subsequently been occupied by bats. Once the replacement roosts are constructed and it is confirmed that bats are not present in the original roost site, the structures may be removed or sealed.

The District shall implement the following measures to avoid and minimize impacts to San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat and American badger. This measure incorporates Mitigation Measures BIO-1a, BIO-1b, BIO-1c, BIO-1d, BIO-1f, and BIO-1j of the Coastal Protection Program EIR. (The measures below provide specificity to protections for San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat and American badger.)

- *Within 30 days prior to project construction, a qualified biologist shall inspect the work area and adjacent areas within 50 feet for woodrat houses and badger dens. If none are found, then no additional measures are necessary.*

- *If a woodrat house is identified within 50 feet of the work area, an exclusion zone shall be erected around the existing woodrat houses using flagging or a temporary fence that does not inhibit the natural movements of wildlife (such as steel T-posts and a single strand of yellow rope or similar materials). The work area shall be relocated as necessary to avoid impacting woodrat houses, even if avoidance is by only a few feet. If woodrat houses cannot be avoided by the trail, CDFW shall be contacted for approval to relocate individuals by live-trapping and building a nearby artificial house as a release site. Approval to relocate shall be acquired from CDFW.*

- *If an occupied badger burrow is identified within 50 feet of the work area, the trail shall be relocated as necessary to avoid impacting the animal or its den. If an active natal den is discovered, work shall cease and a qualified biologist or District staff shall monitor the site until the young have dispersed.*

Nesting Birds

The other special-status wildlife that could occur on the project site are not expected to be affected by any of the proposed activities. Special-status birds (golden eagle, white-tailed kite, long-eared owl, Vaux's swift, olive-sided flycatcher, and grasshopper sparrow) would not be adversely affected by habitat enhancement, conservation grazing, limited public access, or maintenance and operation activities as project activities would not involve removal of terrestrial vegetation and are not expected to occur within their nesting habitat. No mitigation is required.

Special Status Plants

Actions planned under the U & M Plan, such as roadway erosion and damage repair, construction of conservation grazing infrastructure (e.g., water tanks, troughs, and water line), could result in smothering, compaction of soils, or crushing of root systems of special-status plants. This could affect the survival of Franciscan onion (*Allium peninsulare* var. *franciscanum*), Santa Cruz manzanita (*Arctostaphylos andersonii*), Kings Mountain manzanita (*Arctostaphylos regismontana*), Santa Clara red ribbons (*Clarkia concinna* ssp. *automixa*), western leatherwood *(Dirca occidentalis)*, arcuate bush mallow (*Malacothamnus arcuatus)*, robust

monardella (*Monardella villosa* ssp. *globosa*), and Dudley's lousewort (*Pedicularis dudleyi*); therefore, the impact is considered *potentially significant*. The following mitigation measure is necessary to reduce potential impacts to special status plants.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-3

The District shall implement the following measures to avoid and minimize impacts to special-status plants. This measure incorporates Mitigation Measures BIO-1a, BIO-1b, BIO-1d, and BIO-1j of the Coastal Protection Program EIR. (The measures below provide specificity to protections for special-status plants.)

- *The District shall utilize qualified District staff or a contractor to conduct protocol-level preconstruction special-status plant surveys for all potentially occurring species within the project footprint that has not previously been surveyed. Prior to ground-disturbance or vegetation management in potentially suitable habitat, surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate blooming period when they are most readily identifiable in accordance with Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities (DFG 2009). If no special-status plants are found during focused surveys, the findings shall be documented in a letter report, and no further mitigation shall be required.*

- *If special-status plant populations are present in the project footprint, the District shall determine if the population can be avoided by adjusting the project design.*

- *If the impact to special-status plants cannot be avoided, the District shall consult with CDFW and USFWS, as appropriate depending on species status, to determine the appropriate measures to ensure no net loss of occupied habitat or individuals. These measures may include preserving and enhancing existing populations, creation of off-site populations on project mitigation sites through seed collection or transplantation, and/or restoring or creating suitable habitat in sufficient quantities to achieve the no-net-loss standard.*

Level of Impact after Implementation of Mitigation Measures

Implementation of Mitigation Measures 3.4-1 through 3.4-3 would reduce impacts to special status wildlife and plants by implementing conservation measures that would avoid take of the San Francisco garter snake, and minimize effects on California red-legged frog and western pond turtle. San Francisco woodrat houses and occupied badger dens would be avoided. Surveys would be conducted for special-status plants and avoidance and/or compensatory measures would be implemented to minimize potential take of these species or adversely affect their habitat. This impact would be reduced to a *less-than-significant* level.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Sensitive natural communities are of limited distribution statewide or within a county or region that provide important habitat value to native species. Most types of wetlands and riparian communities are considered sensitive natural communities due to their limited distribution in California. In addition, sensitive natural communities include habitats that are subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code, and the state's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, which protects waters of the state. Sensitive natural communities are of special concern because they have high potential to support special-status plant and animal species. Sensitive natural communities can also provide other important ecological functions, such as enhancing flood and erosion control and maintaining water quality.

The project site includes freshwater marsh habitat associated with the ponds and aquatic areas, including Kneudler Lake, Big Spring and Upper Pond. Freshwater marsh is considered a sensitive natural community, but it is also regulated under Section 404 of the CWA; therefore impacts to freshwater marsh and other aquatic habitats are discussed under (c) below. No other sensitive natural communities occur on the project site.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The streams, creeks, ponds, and wetlands found in the project site may be considered waters of the United States and subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the CWA and Section 401 certification from Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Areas supporting riparian or wetland vegetation may also be regulated by CDFW under Section 1600-1616 of the California Fish and Game Code, which provides for the protection of fish, wildlife, and native plant resources.

The project includes actions to enhance habitat for San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog, including temporarily draining Mindego Lake to eradicate fish and control bullfrogs, and removing sediment and vegetation to increase open water habitat at Upper Pond, Big Spring, and Knuedler Lake. Installation of fencing to limit access of cattle to aquatic habitat would improve water quality and promote wetland vegetation growth in specific locations.

Maintenance and operational activities to control erosion include installing reverse-grade dips and ditch relief culverts, rocking low-lying segments, replacing a failing culvert along the Mindego Hill Trail, as well as re-grading, widening, and installing reverse-grade dips on ranch access roads. Construction activities could result in fill or discharge to jurisdictional wetlands. Installation of water lines to water tanks and troughs as part of the grazing infrastructure could affect seasonal wetlands or drainages if the water lines cross aquatic habitats. Loss of riparian and wetland habitat is a *potentially significant impact*.

Mitigation Measure 3.4-4

The District shall implement the following measures to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and other waters of the United States. This measure incorporates Mitigation Measure BIO-1j of the Coastal Protection Program EIR. (The measures below provide specificity to protections for wetlands and waters of the United States.)

- *Where wetlands or other waters of the United States could be affected by draining ponds, dredging sediment and vegetation, installation of grazing infrastructure, erosion and damage repair along roadways, or other activities, a preliminary wetland delineation shall be submitted to USACE for verification. The wetlands may also be subject to CDFW regulation under Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code. No grading, fill, or other ground disturbing activities shall occur until all required permits, regulatory approvals, and permit conditions for effects on wetland habitats are secured.*

- *If the wetlands are determined to be subject to USACE jurisdiction, projects such as restoration activities or trail or road crossings may qualify for a Nationwide Permit if certain criteria are met. For those wetlands that cannot be avoided, the District shall commit to replace, restore, or enhance on a "no net loss" basis (in accordance with USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW) the acreage of all wetlands and other waters of the United States that would be removed, lost, and/or degraded with project implementation. Wetland habitat shall be restored, enhanced, and/or replaced at an acreage and location and by methods agreeable to USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW, as appropriate, depending on agency jurisdiction, and as determined during the permitting processes.*

Level of Impact after Implementation of Mitigation Measures

Implementation of mitigation measure 3.4-4 would reduce impacts related to wetlands and other waters of the United States to *less-than-significant* levels by requiring appropriate consultation with CDFW and/or USACE and following the appropriate permit procedures, including replacement, restoration, and/or enhancement of affected wetlands or other waters of the United States on a no net loss basis.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less-Than-Significant. Wildlife corridors are features that provide connections between two or more areas of habitat that would otherwise be isolated and unusable. Often drainages, creeks, or riparian areas are used by wildlife as movement corridors as these features can provide cover and access across a landscape.

The project site and surrounding areas provide corridors for movement of large wildlife such as deer, mountain lions and raptors. The proposed project includes habitat enhancement, conservation grazing, limited public access, and maintenance and operation activities. Also, no new lighting is proposed that could inhibit the nocturnal movement of species. The installation of new fencing would follow the District's wildlife-friendly fencing design that allows for safe and unimpeded wildlife movement of small and large native species. No activities would significantly fragment interior habitat, alter watercourses, or impede the movement of fish throughout the project site. This impact is *less than significant.*

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less-Than-Significant. The San Mateo County General Plan and Local Coastal Program prohibit development that has significant adverse impacts on sensitive habitat areas. The U & M Plan and mitigation measures included in this document would minimize potential adverse effects on sensitive habitats to less-than-significant levels.

The San Mateo County Ordinance Code also governs the removal and trimming of heritage and significant trees. No tree removal is expected to occur as a result of this project. However, should such a need arise, the District would follow San Mateo County requirements and remain in compliance with local ordinances. Therefore, this impact is considered *less than significant*.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. The project area is not subject to an adopted or proposed Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other habitat conservation plan. Therefore, *no impact* would occur.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources. Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The primary sources referenced for this section are the *Positive Archaeological Survey Report (PASR) and a Finding of No Adverse Effect to Archeological Resources: Mindego Ranch Pond Rehabilitation Project*, *San Mateo County, California*, prepared by Mark Hylkema MA, RPA (See Appendix F) and the *Historical Resource Analysis for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Proposed Mindego Ranch Use and Management Plan* prepared by Alta Cunningham, MA (See Appendix G). A confidential records search for the project site was conducted in November 2012 at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) in Rohnert Park, California by Mark Hylkema MA, RPA.

Mindego Ranch is located within the uplands of the Santa Cruz Mountains, northwest of the San Mateo County line, and is annexed to the western portion of the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. The upper slopes of Mindego Hill consist of grassland vegetation with occasional stands of mixed hardwood and coniferous forest dispersed throughout the hills and drainages. Lower story shrubs have encroached on what once were pasture lands for cattle and many invasive non-native plants have spread over the formerly open landscape.

A brief overview of the cultural setting indicates that very little archaeological surveying has been done in the project region, and only one subsurface excavation has been reported in the Santa Cruz Mountain uplands of Skyline and Russian Ridges. Nonetheless, the known distribution of prehistoric archaeological sites along with ethnohistoric records indicates that the uplands of the project region were important to ancient and more recent Native American societies.

Two ranch houses and one barn, are located on the project site. The Old True Residence is a one- and one-half-story front-gabled home with attached garage and board-and-batten cladding. The residence was built in 1954 and is in poor condition. The barn, built in the 1890's, is a side-gabled saltbox with a corrugated roof and is in poor condition, with the roof collapsing and boards missing from the walls. The second residence, the True Ranch, was built in the late 1970s or early 1980s and is in poor structural condition. This two-story house has an L-shape floor plan and board-and-batten cladding.

3.5.2 DISCUSSION

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?

Less-Than-Significant. Two structures located on the project site, the Old True residence, and the barn, are of historic age. The structures have not been previously identified as appearing eligible for listing or designation in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or San Mateo County Listing of Historical and Archaeological Resources.

Eligibility for listing on the NRHP and CRHR rests on twin factors of significance and integrity. A property must have both significance and integrity to be considered eligible. Loss of integrity, if sufficiently great, will overwhelm historical significance a property may possess and render it ineligible. Likewise, a property can have complete integrity, but if it lacks significance, it must also be considered ineligible.

The structures on the project site do not appear to be significant with respect to the history of ranching in San Mateo County, nor did any persons associated with these structures make significant contributions to history at the local, state, or national level. The architectural style of the Old True residence, associated barn, is not an important example of a master builder or designer. In addition, these structures are dilapidated. (See Historic Resources Analysis, Appendix G.)

Therefore, the Mindego Ranch structures do not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR and are not considered to be historically significant for the purposes of CEQA. The proposed demolition of these structures would be considered a *less-than-significant* impact.

b, c) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological or paleontological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The records search conducted for the proposed project revealed three previously recorded prehistoric archaeological sites within two miles of the project location. Only one site, SMA-85, was found to be located within the project site. Recent investigations at SMA-85 (Hylkema and Cearley nd.) have found that while the variety and sources of the lithic debitage scattered throughout the site boundaries are significant and may allow for a determination of eligibility to the National Register under Criterion D, the site lacks subsurface stratigraphic integrity; and the surface lithic scatter has been altered by historic ranching activities (See the PASR included as Appendix F).

It is unlikely that operation of the proposed project would result in the discovery of archaeological or paleontological resources, as the goal is to protect and enhance habitat for sensitive wildlife species, while responsibly integrating land management activities and limited public access at Mindego Ranch. However, the potential exists to encounter previously undiscovered or unrecorded archaeological and paleontological sites and materials during construction, maintenance, and operations projects including road erosion treatment projects and removal of existing structures. If such resources were to represent “historical resources” or “unique archaeological resources” as defined by CEQA, any substantial change to or destruction of these resources would be a *potentially significant* impact.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-1

The District shall implement Mitigation Measure CUL-2 from the Coastal Protection Program EIR:

Protocol for Unexpected Discovery of Archaeological and Paleontological Cultural Materials.

In the event that any cultural resources are exposed during construction, work at the location of the find will halt immediately within 10 meters (30 feet) of the find. If an archaeologist is not present at the time of the discovery, the District will contact an archaeologist for identification and evaluation in accordance with CEQA criteria.

A reasonable effort will be made by the District and archaeologist to avoid or minimize harm to the discovery until significance is determined and an appropriate treatment can be identified and implemented. Methods to protect finds include fencing, covering remains with protective material and culturally sterile soil or plywood. If vandalism is a threat, 24-hour security shall be provided. During this evaluation period, construction operations outside of the find location can continue preferably with an archaeologist monitoring any subsurface excavations.

If the resource cannot be avoided, the archaeologist will develop an appropriate Action Plan for treatment within 48 hours to minimize or mitigate the adverse effects. The District will not proceed with construction activities that could affect the discovery until the Action Plan has been reviewed and approved. The treatment effort required to mitigate the inadvertent exposure of significant cultural resources will be guided by a research design appropriate to the discovery and potential research data inherent in the resource in association with suitable archaeological field techniques and analytical strategies. The recovery effort will be detailed in a professional report in accordance with current archaeological standards. Any non-grave associated artifacts will be curated with an appropriate repository.

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of this Mitigation Measure would require the performance of professionally accepted and legally compliant procedures for the discovery of archaeological and paleontological resources and would, therefore, reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Based on documentary research, no evidence suggests that any prehistoric or historic-era marked or un-marked human interments are present within or in the immediate vicinity of the project site. However, there is a possibility that unmarked, previously unknown Native American or other graves could be present and could be uncovered during maintenance and operations projects, including road erosion treatment projects and removal of existing structures. California law recognizes the need to protect historic-era and Native American human burials, skeletal remains, and grave-associated items from vandalism and inadvertent destruction and any substantial change to or destruction of these resources would be a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure 3.5-2

The District shall implement Mitigation Measure CUL-3 from the Coastal Protection Program EIR:

Native American Burial Plan (NABP)

1) *In the event of an inadvertent discovery of human remains and cultural items during project construction, the field crew supervisor shall take immediate steps, if necessary, to secure and protect any remains and cultural materials. This shall include but is not limited to such measures as (a) temporary avoidance by construction until the remains and items can be removed; (b) posting a security person; (c) placement of a*

security fence around the area of concern; or, (d) some combination of these measures. Any such measures employed will depend upon the nature and particular circumstances of the discovery.

2) *The County Medical Examiner (Coroner) shall be notified by the field crew supervisor or other designated District manager and informed of the find and of any efforts made to identify the remains as Native American. If the remains are identified as a prehistoric Native American by either a professional archaeologist under contract to the District or the Medical Examiner's forensic archaeologist, the Medical Examiner is responsible for contacting the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of notification of the find. The Medical Examiner may choose to document and remove the remains at his/her discretion depending on the circumstances of the discovery. The NAHC then designates and notifies a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD has 24 hours to consult and provide recommendations for the treatment or disposition, with proper dignity, of the human remains and grave goods [Note: Other culturally affiliated Native Americans [Indians] may be consulted by the MLD during the consultation and recommendation process to determine treatment of the skeletal remains].*

3) *Each burial and associated cultural items shall be stored as a unit in a secure facility, which shall be accessible to the MLD and other Native American representative(s) or their designated alternates upon prior arrangement.*

4) *The remains and associated cultural items shall be reburied in a secure location as near as possible to the area of their discovery or at an off-site location acceptable to the MLD that has minimal potential for future disturbance. The reburial shall be done in a manner that shall discourage or deter future disturbance. Reburial shall be conducted by persons designated by the MLD, with the assistance, if requested, of the District's field crew. The location shall be fully documented, filed with the NAHC and the California Historical Resources Information System, Northwest Information Center, California State University, Sonoma and treated as confidential information.*

5) *If the NAHC is unable to identify a MLD, or the MLD fails to make a recommendation, or the District or designate rejects the recommendation of the MLD and mediation (as per Section 5097.94 subdivision (k)) fails, reinterment of the human remains and associated cultural items associated shall take place with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance.*

6) *For security reasons, no news releases, including but not limited to photographs, videotapes, written articles, or other such means that contains information about human remains or burial-related items of Native American origin shall be released by any party during the discovery, recovery and reburial unless approved by the MLD.*

7) *Any disputes that arise among the MLD and representatives of affected Native American groups and/or between the District or designate and the MLD concerning cultural affiliation or the ultimate disposition of Native American human remains and associated funerary objects and unassociated funerary objects shall be resolved according to the dispute resolution procedures in Section 5097.94 of the State of California Public Resources Code.*

8) *The Archaeological Data Recovery/Native American Burial Treatment Report(s) shall be prepared by professional archaeologists. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following: project overview; ethnographic section; previous archaeological research in the region and on-site; circumstances of discovery; recovery procedures and techniques; artifact analysis; faunal analysis; osteological analysis and interpretation; and, conclusions. The MLD and other interested Native American representative(s) shall be provided an opportunity to review the report and submit comments within the same time period as accorded any other reviewers.*

9) *Objects not associated with the human remains and recovered from private land shall be transferred to the District. If curation of any objects is required, curation will be at repository approved by the District. Repositories can include the History Museums of San Jose collections, the Tiburon Archaeological Research Group, San Francisco State University and the Collections Facility, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park.*

3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Geology and Soils. Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is located in the RROSP within the headwaters of the Mindego Creek and Alpine Creek watersheds. The preserve is characterized by moderate to steep mountainous terrain dissected by narrow and steep-gradient ephemeral to perennial streams. Slopes range from 10% near the ridge tops to 75+% locally along the slopes near valley bottoms of the larger tributaries. The hillslopes are slightly convex, rounded toward the ridge tops with local steep streamside slopes found at the base of the hillsides. The ground is locally benchy, consistent with deep-seated landsliding. Elevations range from 900 feet along the valley bottom of Alpine Creek to 2,143 feet at the top of Mindego Hill. Ridgetops tend to be open grassland with lower slopes forested (Best 2012).

Mindego Hill is a prominent feature at the end of a south- and west-trending ridge that separates Mindego Creek to the north from Alpine Creek to the south. A one-mile long existing paved and gravel patrol road (Mindego Hill Road) extends along the ridgetop from Alpine Road, accessing several old homes and ranch buildings (Best 2012).

The project area is situated on the western flank of the Coast Range Physiographic Province of Northwest California, a series of coastal mountain chains paralleling the pronounced northwest-southeast structural grain of northwest California. The area is geologically active, dominated by the northwest-southeast trending San Andreas Fault Zone (SAFZ), located about 5 miles to the northeast (Best 2012).

Geology of the area is dominated by a sequence of tightly folded and faulted Tertiary-age volcanic and clastic marine sediment and rocks. The majority of the project site is mapped as underlain by Mindego Basalt and related volcanic rocks (Tmb) with smaller amounts of Lambert Shale (Tla), Monterey Mudstone (Tm), and sandstone of the Tahana Member of the Purisma Formation (Tpt). Mindego Basalt is described as extrusive flow breccia and intrusive medium to coarse crystalline rock (Best 2012).

Overlying bedrock is a thin mantle of colluvium and soil of varying thicknesses. Near surface soils are primarily a sandy clayey silt (SC-SM) to gravelly clayey sand (GC). The soils are generally well-drained, but can be seasonally wet and inherently prone to erosion especially where water is concentrated. Roads crossing these soils, especially in the open grasslands, tend to rut easily with winter use, and large gullies form where road runoff is concentrated and discharged off the road. A brief inspection of nearby ranch areas showed that many year-round roads routed through the open grassland areas are rocked to prevent them from rutting in the soft soils (Best 2012).

The geomorphology of the area is consistent with both shallow and deep-seated landsliding. Several large-scale deep-seated landslide complexes ranging from a few acres to over 60 acres are found in the project site with many of the roads crossing these slides. These slides are characterized by a somewhat cohesive slide mass with a relatively deep failure plane extending 30 feet or more into bedrock. These slides are characterized by bench and irregular topography; rate of movement is generally slow and episodic with most slides vegetated. Due to the proximity of the San Andreas and San Gregorio fault zones to the plan area, high ground accelerations experienced during earthquakes are a contributing factor in the reactivation of many of the deep-seated landslides within the area. Future movement on these slides may be possible during large earthquakes or storms and could result in damage to existing roads and trails (Best 2012). Many shallow landslides have occurred in recent years from high-intensity and long-duration rainstorms (e.g., 1982 and 1996 storms). These rainfall-activated landslides are typically shallow debris slides and debris flows restricted to near surface soils and weathered bedrock. Such slides most commonly occur on steep slopes (greater than 65%) along streams or in shallow and steep ravines and swales. Some shallow landslides are road-related, caused by the placement of fill on already steep slopes, and/or by concentration of road runoff.

3.6.2 DISCUSSION

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed U&M Plan would permanently preserve the area as open space. The proposed project includes demolition of onsite structures. No additional structures would be developed as part of the proposed project. Visitors to the project site would be primarily outside and would not typically be directly exposed to risk from rupture of an earthquake fault. In fact, the project site would be considered a relatively safe place to be during an earthquake event. This impact is considered *less than significant*. Note that visitors may be subject to indirect events induced by fault rupture, most notably landslides. Risk to visitors from landslides is discussed below under "iii and iv".

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less-Than-Significant. As indicated above under "i", the proposed project involves removal of the existing onsite structures. No structures would be developed on the project site. Visitors would be relatively unexposed to hazards associated with seismic ground shaking. The impact is considered *less than significant*.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less-Than-Significant. Liquefaction and other seismic-related ground failure primarily affect structures. Because the proposed project would remove the existing structures from the project site and would not result in construction of any new structures, impacts would be *less than significant*.

iv) Landslides?

Less-Than-Significant. As described above under "Environmental Setting," landslides have occurred in the past on the project site. Future landslides on the site may occur regardless of land use activities. However, providing public access to the project site, including providing access to trails in areas prone to landslides, could increase the exposure of the public to risks associated with landslides.

The EIR for the Coastal Protection Program analyzed the impacts of increased public exposure to dangers from geologic hazards and found that with careful site planning, hazard areas can be avoided and the risk to public safety can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. Mitigation Measures GEO-1a and GEO-1b from the Coastal Protection Program EIR require surveys to identify unstable slopes in landslide areas, as well as monitoring and regular maintenance of trails.

In 2012, a Road and Trails Inventory was prepared by Timothy Best in 2012 for the project site. The report, which is included as part of the proposed U&M Plan, identifies specific trail and roadway segments that require improvements associated with drainage, erosion, slope failure, and blockage at stream crossings. The report recommends treatments for improving these trails and roadways, including cleaning existing drainages; installing new/replacement culverts, slough walls, dips, berm breaks, energy dissipaters; reshaping and rocking the road; and re-grading roads (Best 2012).

In addition, District Resource Management Policies (GS-1, GS-2) require avoidance of high-risk areas subject to landslides, liquefaction, faulting, flooding and erosion, as well as monitoring of soil erosion and slope failure and avoiding construction in problem areas.

Implementation of the recommended treatments in the Road and Trails Inventory is consistent with Mitigation Measures GEO-1a and GEO-1b from the Coastal Protection Program EIR, and is also consistent with District Resource Management Policies. Because the District will resolve the priority issues, and will continue to monitor these facilities as required by policy, this impact is *less-than-significant*.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less-Than-Significant. The project site is located in the moderately steep to very steep hills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Erosion hazard ratings for these soils are characterized as moderate to high, based largely on slope and soil type. Road grading and repair and the reintroduction of grazing into portions of the site both have the potential to increase soil erosion and instability in the steep portions of project site. The existing roads were studied in the Road and Trail Inventory (Best 2012) for their potential contribution to soil erosion. The report includes recommended road improvements to minimize the erosion potential of existing roads and trails. (See discussion under "a-iv" above.)

Grazing operations on District lands are guided by Resource Management Policies, which aim to ensure that grazing is compatible with and supports wildlife and habitat. Specific Grazing Management policies include requirements to prepare site-specific grazing management plans that include BMPs, managing access to water features and supplying supplemental water supply as needed to protect water quality, and monitoring water quality in ponds, wetlands, and water features (to name a few). The proposed U&M Plan includes reintroduction of grazing on the site. Recommendations for the appropriate reintroduction of grazing in the project site were provided in the *Mindego Hill Ranch Grazing Management Plan* (Sage 2012). These recommendations include specifications and conservation management practice standards from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), and California Construction Handbook, including: prescribed grazing; water well, water pipelines, water troughs or tanks for livestock and wildlife water; spring development; road stock pond, and gully maintenance items such as rock rip rap, earth dike water bar diversions, slope drains, outlet and inlet protection for culverts, and straw bale barrier placement. Specific rangeland conservation management practices include the following:

- adherence to carrying capacity limitations to prevent overgrazing;
- rotation of grazing based on season;
- maintaining specific performance standards for slope vegetation (residual dry matter) length and cover;
- placement of salt/mineral supplement away from water sources and away from public-used trails and roads;
- restriction of supplemental feeding except under specific circumstances;
- installation of watering infrastructure consistent with the specifically recommended size and location (away from natural water sources to benefit wildlife and away from public roads and trails);
- repairs to existing fencing and installation of new fencing to limit livestock access to natural water sources and riparian areas;
- repairs and maintenance of roadways and roadway infrastructure, including drainage and erosion control features;
- monitoring predator activity (coyotes and mountain lions) and continued feral pig management;
- controlling specifically identified invasive plants;
- monitoring (using photo documentation) and maintaining riparian functionality within the watershed; and
- using vegetative filter strips to remove sediment and reduce pollutants from entering riparian and wetland systems.

All of the recommendations described above would substantially reduce any excessive erosion caused by road and trail, maintenance and use, as well as re-introduction of cattle onto portions of the ranch. These recommendations are consistent with those local and regional resource and livestock management practices that are encouraged by various local, state and federal agencies including but not limited to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, California EPA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of California Cooperative Extension, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office for San Mateo County, Natural

Resource Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The recommendations in the Road and Trail Inventory and the Grazing Management Plan are incorporated into the proposed U&M Plan.

In addition, re-grading and maintenance of roads would result in minor soil disturbance. There are currently District-wide requirements in place to protect water quality during maintenance activities. As outlined in the District's Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures for Routine Maintenance Activities in Water Courses, which has been reviewed and approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the District follows specifications and guidelines designed to protect water quality. Additionally, maintenance work in watercourses will meet standards and be consistent with the current RWQCB Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for routine maintenance activities on District lands. These standards would be followed, as applicable, based on site conditions and specific project requirements.

Because the District would implement the above-described measures to reduce soil erosion, impacts associated with erosion would be *less-than-significant* with implementation of the proposed project.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less-Than-Significant. Generally, impacts associated with unstable soils relate to potential damage to structures. The proposed project would remove existing structures from the site and would not develop any new structures. Therefore, no structures would be affected by unstable soils. Landslide-related hazards associated with proposed public access are addressed under "a-iv" above. Project-related impacts related to unstable soils are *less than significant*.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial risks to life or property?

Less-Than-Significant. Similar to the discussion under "c" above, substantial risk to life or property would generally occur to habitable buildings, which could experience compromised structural integrity due to expansive soils. The proposed project involves demolition of all existing onsite structures and does not include construction of any new structures. Therefore, similar to "c" above, the impact is *less than significant*.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include any proposed restrooms and would therefore not require any septic system of other form of waste water disposal. *No impact* would result.

3.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.7.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as greenhouse gases (GHGs), play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. GHGs are responsible for "trapping" solar radiation in the earth's atmosphere, a phenomenon known as the greenhouse effect. Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and have led to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth's climate, known as global climate change or global warming. It is *extremely unlikely* that global climate change of the past 50 years can be explained without the contribution from human activities (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2007). By adoption of Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and Senate Bill (SB) 97, the State of California has acknowledged that the effects of GHG emissions cause adverse environmental impacts.

Emissions of GHGs have the potential to adversely affect the environment because such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to global climate change. Although the emissions of one single project will not cause global climate change, GHG emissions from multiple projects throughout the world could result in a cumulative impact with respect to global climate change.

Legislation and executive orders on the subject of climate change in California have established a statewide context and a process for developing an enforceable statewide cap on GHG emissions. Given the nature of environmental consequences from GHGs and global climate change, CEQA requires that lead agencies consider evaluating the cumulative impacts of GHGs, even relatively small (on a global basis) additions. Small contributions to this cumulative impact (from which significant effects are occurring and are expected to worsen over time) may be potentially considerable and therefore significant.

Therefore, the global climate change analysis presented in this section estimates and analyzes the GHG emissions associated with construction- and operations-related activities that would occur under the proposed U&M Plan for Mingedo Ranch.

The BAAQMD is the local agency overseeing air quality considerations in San Mateo County. On June 2, 2010 the BAAQMD adopted new CEQA significance thresholds including a threshold for GHGs of 1,100 metric tons MT CO_2e/yr for evaluating operation-related emissions (BAAQMD 2010). This threshold was designed to establish the

mass emissions level at which a project's contribution would be considered a significant environmental impact under CEQA. The threshold was developed based on overall projections of development in the region, and how the region would come into compliance with the goals established by AB 32.

On March 5, 2012 the Alameda County Superior Court issued a judgment finding that the BAAQMD had failed to comply with CEQA when it adopted these thresholds. The court did not determine whether the thresholds were valid on the merits, but rather found that the adoption of the thresholds was a project under CEQA. The court issued a writ of mandate ordering the BAAQMD to set aside the thresholds and cease their dissemination until the BAAQMD had complied with CEQA.

CEQA gives lead agencies discretion whether or not to classify a particular environmental impact as significant. Ultimately, formulation of a standard or "threshold" of significance requires the lead agency to make a policy judgment about where the line should be drawn distinguishing adverse impacts it considers significant from those that are not deemed significant. This judgment must, however, be based on scientific information and other factual data to the extent possible. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064[b]).

Although the Alameda County Superior Court has ordered the BAAQMD to cease dissemination of the previously adopted threshold of 1,100 MT CO_2e/yr, the court has made no finding on the applicability or the merits of the quantitative threshold. BAAQMD states that lead agencies will need to determine appropriate air quality thresholds to use for each project they review based on substantial evidence that they should include in the administrative record for the project. One resource BAAQMD provides as a reference for determining appropriate thresholds is the CEQA Thresholds Options and Justification Report developed by staff in 2009 (BAAQMD 2009). The CEQA Thresholds Options and Justification Report outlines substantial evidence supporting a variety of thresholds of significance.

Therefore, because the proposed project would result emissions of GHGs from construction and regular maintenance, and is located within the BAAQMD's jurisdiction for which these thresholds were determined to be applicable, the County considers the threshold of 1,100 MT CO_2e/yr to be an acceptable threshold for CEQA significance with regards to GHG emissions.

3.7.2 DISCUSSION

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less-Than-Significant. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a noticeable increase in visitation. Any additional vehicle trips generated during operation of the project would be negligible. Therefore, greenhouse gas emissions associated with increased vehicle trips would be minimal. Proposed construction activities include limited heavy construction equipment associated primarily with the road and drainage repair, demolition, and some of the habitat restoration features, including removal of sediment from lakes**.** To estimate GHG emissions, GHG modeling was conducted using the BAAQMD-approved California Emissions Estimator Model, Version 2001.1.1 (CalEEMod). A summary of estimated GHG emissions is provided below in Table 3.7-1.

Table 3.7-1 Summary of Estimated Emissions of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent Associated with Project-Related Activities (MT CO_2e/year)	
Construction-Related Activities (average annual)	132*
Operations (mobile- and area sources, energy use)	--
Cattle	159**
Total	291
BAAQMD Threshold of Significance	1,100

Notes:
MT/year = metric tons per year; CO_2e = carbon dioxide-equivalent
Detailed assumptions and modeling output files are included in Appendix D, including construction and methane emissions from cattle.
Any emissions from vehicle trips and power usage would be negligible and therefore were not modeled.
Emissions associated with construction activities were estimated using the BAAQMD-approved CalEEMod model.
*This is for the first year of construction. The model shows that future construction years have lower GHG emissions.
**Emissions from cattle were modeled based on widely accepted emission factors, not CalEEMod. For details see Appendix D.

Source: Modeling Conducted by Ascent Environmental 2013.

Based on the modeling conducted, project-related activities would result in 291 MT per year (MT/year) of CO_2e emissions. These emissions levels would be less than BAAQMD's threshold of significance of 1,100 MT/year. Thus, project-generated emissions would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of GHGs. As a result, this impact would be *less than significant*.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less-Than-Significant. As discussed under item a) above, the total GHG emissions associated with this project would be less than BAAQMD's threshold of 1,100 MT/year. Because BAAQMD's threshold is based on the emissions reduction targets established by AB 32 for the year 2020 project-generated GHG emissions would not conflict with any other applicable plans, policies, or regulations established for the purposes of reducing GHG emissions. Therefore, this impact would be *less than significant*.

3.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.8.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

During the purchase of the property, POST, the previous property owner, contracted with an environmental firm to prepare a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and Phase II Investigations Report ("Phase I / Phase II Report"). The Phase I / Phase II Report identified two areas where soil contamination levels exceeded current RWQCB ESLs and Cal EPA DTSC screening levels. These areas included the corral area where spraying of cattle with chemicals to control pests may have occurred, an unpermitted landfill located near the True residential structure (which itself is proposed for demolition). The presence of residual-level concentrations of petroleum

hydrocarbons (below RWQCB ESLs) was noted around the perimeter of the Main House garage driveway, likely due to vehicle maintenance.

The investigations indicate that residual chemicals consistent with organochlorine pesticides are present in the soil at the corral at levels exceeding current California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 2 ("RWQCB"), Environmental Screening Levels ("ESLs") and California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA), Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), California Human Health Screening Level. Lead and petroleum hydrocarbon impacted soils are present in the landfill at levels exceeding current RWQCB ESLs.

Since the time that the Phase I and Phase II Reports were prepared, the District hired Geocon Consultants, Inc. to further investigate the contamination associated with the existing landfill. In their November 2011 report, Geocon found that the levels of contaminants of concern in the landfill soil and groundwater generally do not exceed environmental screening levels and do not present a threat to human health and the environment. Geocon also investigated the geotechnical conditions of the landfill, including an evaluation of the slope stability under static and seismic conditions. The slope stability analysis indicates the landfill is stable for open space use with no structural improvement in its current configuration.

The Phase I and Phase II Reports indicate the presence of residual-level concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbons in soils near the perimeter of the Main House garage driveway, i.e., at concentrations below RWQCB residential ESLs. No chlorinated solvents (i.e., degreasing solvents) were detected, with the exception of a low concentration of Freon detected in one soil sample.

In addition to the contaminants discussed above, numerous buildings and structures exist on the project site which, given the ages of the various structures, suggest that a potential exists for the presence of asbestos-containing materials and lead paint associated with these structures.

3.8.2 DISCUSSION

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less-Than-Significant. District Ordinance 93-1, Section 409.2 prohibits the general public from possessing or using harmful substances on District lands. The proposed project does not include routine use of hazardous materials in the Preserve with the exception of small quantities of common household hazardous materials such as pesticides, fuels, oils, lubricants, solvents, and detergents. A controlled amount of pesticides would occasionally be applied in grazing operations and for vegetation management. Pesticide applications would comply with label instructions and all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Implementation of the proposed U&M Plan would not pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment. This impact is *less than significant*.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. Existing structures on the project site may contain building materials that contain lead and asbestos. The proposed project involves demolition of dilapidated structures, which may include these hazardous materials. California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 8, Section 1529 "Asbestos" is enforced by Cal OSHA and sets very strict exposure limits for employees engaged in abatement and remediation activities and requires employers to perform an initial exposure assessment as well as daily monitoring of employee exposure. Section 1529 also includes a list of specific compliance measures including

(but not limited to) vacuum cleaners with HEPA filters, wet methods, ventilation systems with HEPA filters, isolation/containment of asbestos dust-generating areas, as well as prohibitions against use of compressed air to remove asbestos without a ventilation system, dry sweeping/shoveling of asbestos, and use of high-speed abrasive disc saws without proper point of cut ventilators. Additional, more stringent, compliance measures are provided specific to Class I and Class II asbestos removal.

Furthermore, BAAQMD Regulation 11, Rule 2 also regulates activities involving handling of asbestos related to demolition, renovation, and manufacturing. Demolition of any structures containing asbestos would be subject to this Rule. Rule 2 prohibits visible emissions of asbestos. BAAQMD's Rule 2 requires wet methods or use of HEPA filter-fitted ventilation systems, use of leak-tight chutes for getting materials to the ground, use of plastic barriers and HEPA filter-fitted ventilation systems to contain areas being stripped. Rule 2 also requires an asbestos survey, including materials sampling and lab testing, to be performed by a qualified consultant prior to abatement activities to determine the category of asbestos. Specific disposal methods are also required under Rule 2.

Similar to its regulations for asbestos handling, CCR (Title 8, Section 1532.1) contains lead exposure limits for employees engaged in demolition activities. Also similar to its asbestos regulations, CCR requires employers to prepare exposure assessments and exposure monitoring. CCR Section 1532.1 also includes methods of compliance, including but not limited to preparation of a compliance program, mechanical ventilation, respiratory protection, protective clothing and equipment, specific housekeeping practices, medical surveillance (including biological monitoring), temporary removal of exposed employees, signage and postings, and appropriate record keeping.

Handling of asbestos and lead is regulated by state law and BAAQMD rules. These rules include guidelines to minimize exposure of construction workers (including monitored and enforceable exposure limits) and release of these substances into the environment. Because the proposed project would be required to comply with the CCR and BAAQMD rules, demolition activities associated with the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment.

Public access onto the project site would be allowed within a very limited area (See Exhibit 2-5). General public use of the project site would be primarily limited to low-intensity, non-motorized, and non-emitting uses, including hiking and equestrian use. The possibility of the incidental release of motor vehicle oil, grease, or fuel is therefore limited to the infrequent use of the trails and roads by District patrol and maintenance vehicles, tenant vehicles, occasional emergency responders, and vehicles and machinery used during the temporary construction process. Any release of minor amounts of hazardous material resulting from the limited vehicular use does not pose a significant hazard to the public. Impacts related to water quality are addressed in the Hydrology and Water Quality section of this IS.

As described above in the Environmental Setting, the Phase I and Phase II reports prepared for the property indicate a few areas on the project site with existing contamination including the corral, the landfill, and the Main House garage driveway.

Contamination associated with the Main House garage driveway is limited primarily to residual levels of petroleum hydrocarbons at concentrations below RWQCB residential ESLs and a low concentration of Freon detected in one sample. Because the levels of contamination are below residential ESLs, and because no public access or earth work would occur in this area, implementation of the proposed project would not expose visitors, staff, or construction workers to risk of exposure to existing contamination.

The District will remediate or cap soil contaminants in the corral area as part of structural demolition in this area. Although a remediation plan has not yet been prepared, no public access would be allowed in the vicinity

of the corral and no roadway improvements would occur within the vicinity of the corral. (See Exhibit 2-6.) Therefore, because visitors, staff, and construction workers would not come into contact with the contaminated soil associated with the corral, remediation of this area is not necessary prior to implementation of the other components of proposed project, including public access. In addition, because no groundwork would be performed in the corral area prior to the remediation, no significant disturbance of contaminated soil would occur and, therefore, no increased emission of contaminated stormwater runoff would occur. The future remediation plan for the corral area would be prepared in accordance with EPA and Cal EPA regulations and in coordination with RWQCB (and DTSC if appropriate).

Regarding the existing landfill, the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) reviewed Geocon's report evaluating the contamination associated with the landfill and issued a memorandum approving "Closure in Place" of the existing landfill with implementation of site management measures, which are incorporated as mitigation measures below. These measures include implementation of a stormwater runoff control plan, designation of the landfill as a "closed area," enforcement of access restrictions, and inspection of slopes associated with the landfill to ensure erosion is not occurring.

Due to the existing contamination associated with the existing landfill, site management measures are required by RWQCB for closure in place. These measures are included in the proposed U&M Plan and include the following:

- implementation of a site-specific Stormwater Runoff Control Plan to divert surface runoff away from the landfill area;
- designation of the landfill area as a "closed area" with signs posted;
- enforcement of the access restrictions with the areas identified on District preserve maps; and
- inspection of site slopes associated with the landfill area following significant rain events to ensure slope erosion is not occurring.

Implementation of these measures would reduce impacts associated with exposure of the public, District staff, and construction workers to hazardous materials associated with the landfill. However, although the restriction of access associated with the corral reduces potential risk of exposure, it is important to appropriately communicate the restriction to District staff and visitors. Lack of appropriate signage and identification on preserve maps could result in a *potentially significant* impact related to hazardous materials exposure. Therefore, the following mitigation measure includes signage requirements to ensure no unauthorized visitors, staff, or construction workers access the area.

Mitigation Measure 3.8-1

The District shall designate the corral area as a "closed area" and install signs to alert the public and District staff that the area is closed. After the corral area remediation is completed according to RWQCB (and/or DTSC) standards, the signage may be removed from the corral area. The District shall also enforce the access restrictions and note the restrictions on District Preserve maps.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact. As discussed under "a" above, the proposed project would not result in the use, transport, or disposal of substantial hazardous materials. In addition, the project site is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The nearest school is La Honda Elementary School, located at the end of Sears Ranch Road, over 1.5 miles west of the project site boundary. *No impact* would occur.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less-Than-Significant. The Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites (Cortese) List is a planning document used by the State, local agencies, and developers to comply with the CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. Government Code section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency to develop at least annually an updated Cortese List. DTSC is responsible for a portion of the information contained in the Cortese List. Other State and local government agencies are required to provide additional hazardous material release information for the Cortese List. DTSC's EnviroStor database provides DTSC's component of Cortese List data.

The 2007 Phase I and Phase II states that representatives at the RWQCB, DTSC, and BAAQMD indicated that no file information for the Subject Property was identified at their respective agencies. The search of DOGGR well records on-line indicates that no oil and gas wells are located on or within one-half mile of the project site, based on the coordinates of reported well locations provided by DOGGR. San Mateo County Health Services Agency files contained no files or references to chemical use or releases on the project site or other documentation related to aboveground or underground storage tanks, or chemical use violations (EKI 2007). Ascent Environmental searched DTSC's EnviroStor database in 2013 and verified that no additional issues have been identified since the 2007 Phase I and Phase II reports (DTSC 2013).

The proposed project site is not identified on the Cortese list or other State and county hazardous materials lists; therefore, impacts are *less than significant*.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The project site is not located within two miles of a public airport and is not located within an airport land use plan. *No impact* would occur.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

Less-Than-Significant. A private airstrip is located approximately 1.25 miles northwest of the project site, off of Langley Hill Road. The runway approach angles at a northeast/southwest direction, with Langley Hill impeding aircraft associated with landing strip from maintaining a low altitude in the vicinity of the project site. The proposed project does not include any structures or activities that could cause safety hazards associated with air traffic. The proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. There are no adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans affecting the project area. The proposed project includes limited public access for recreation. No structures are proposed. No public vehicle access is proposed. The proposed project would provide appropriate emergency vehicle access. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The project would result in *no impact*. See Section 3.16, Public Services for more detailed discussion regarding emergency response.

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The proposed project would decrease risk of wildland fire due to the re-introduction of grazing on the property, which would reduce onsite fuels by controlling vegetation during the fire season, and also due to the demolition of existing dilapidated structures.

The risk to the recreating public posed by potential wildland fires was analyzed in the Coastal Protection Program EIR. The Coastal Protection Program EIR concludes that, based on the District's existing management of steep and heavily vegetated lands on the Bay side of the Peninsula, public access to District-managed lands does not present a significant risk of loss, injuries, or death as a result of wildland fire. While fire protection within current District boundaries is provided by the jurisdictional local fire departments and CAL FIRE, the District works cooperatively with these jurisdictional fire agencies to reduce fire risk by assisting them to respond quickly and effectively to wildland fires. The District maintains fire breaks to slow or arrest the spread of wildland fires, and a system of District maintained fire roads ensures adequate access to remote areas. District lands are patrolled routinely by trained staff members in vehicles equipped with wildland fire suppression equipment, providing first response assistance until the jurisdictional fire agencies arrive and take over the scene. The addition of public use and District staff presence would result in an increased ability to detect and respond the appropriate fire agencies when fires occur.

District Ordinance 93-1 Section 404 prohibits fires and smoking on District lands. In addition, District Rangers will regularly patrol the project site and are trained and equipped for initial response in the Incident Command System (ICS) for fire suppression, assisting with the response of jurisdictional fire agencies to the scene of a fire. The District's radio and repeater system combined with ranger patrols and staff on call 24 hours per day enables prompt and effective communication with emergency service providers in the event of a wildland fire or emergency response call. Additionally, the District purchased a 1,500 - 2,000-gallon maintenance-style water truck that is available to deliver water for mutual aid calls to assist in fire suppression activities.

The Coastal Protection Program EIR concludes that although the project would not expose the public to significant risk from fire, it would increase the need for coordination with other agencies in fire suppression. This coordination is necessary to ensure swift and adequate response to wildland fire. Furthermore, construction activities on the project site could also result increased ignition risk. Consistent with the Coastal Protection Program EIR's conclusion the impact is considered *potentially significant*.

Mitigation Measure 3.8-2a

The District shall implement the following applicable mitigation measures incorporated directly from the Coastal Protection Program EIR:

- *The District shall select indigenous plant materials and/or seed mixes utilized along trails for their low maintenance and drought and fire resistant characteristics to minimize additional fuel available to wildland fires to the extent feasible. (Coastal Protection Program EIR Mitigation HAZ-2a)*

- *The District shall limit trail use to low-intensity hiking, bird watching, bicycling, equestrian use, environmental education and other similar low hazard uses, and prohibit smoking, camping, picnicking, fireworks and off-road vehicle use. (Coastal Protection Program EIR Mitigation HAZ-2e)*

Mitigation Measure 3.8-2b

To further reduce the potential for wildland fire ignition beyond the Coastal Protection Program EIR mitigation, the following additional mitigation measure is required:

- *In order to reduce fire ignition risk, the District currently requires the following measures for all maintenance and construction activities within the Preserve:*
  - *All equipment to be used during construction and maintenance activities must have an approved spark arrestor.*
  - *Grass and fuels around construction sites where construction vehicles are allowed to be parked will be cut or reduced.*
  - *Mechanical construction equipment that can cause an ignition will not be used when the National Weather Service issues a Red Flag Warning for the San Francisco Bay Area.*
  - *Hired contractors will be required to:*
    - *Provide water and/or fire extinguisher to suppress potential fires caused by the work performed.*
    - *Remind workers that smoking is prohibited at the work site and on any District land per contract conditions and District Ordinance.*
    - *Maintain working ABC fire extinguishers on all vehicles in the work area.*
    - *Contact both Mountain View Dispatch at (650) 968-4411 and CAL FIRE, Skylonda, at (650) 851-1860 for emergency response in the event of a fire.*

Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.8-2a (which incorporates mitigation from the Coastal Protection Program EIR) and Mitigation Measure 3.8-2b (which is in addition to the Coastal Protection Program EIR mitigation) would reduce potential impacts associated with wildland fire risk by increasing coordination with local and State fire protection services, reducing fuels near trailheads, prohibiting open fires and smoking, and requiring ignition risk reductions for construction and maintenance activities. Consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR, implementing these mitigation measures would reduce the impacts to a *less-than-significant* level.

3.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. Hydrology and Water Quality. Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☒	☐
j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.9.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is located within the San Francisco Coastal South watershed area and, more specifically, is located within the headwaters of Mindego Creek and Alpine Creek watersheds, tributaries to San Gregorio Creek and part of the San Gregorio Creek basin. The San Gregorio Creek basin has been classified as an impaired water

body due to sedimentation/siltation and high levels of coliform by the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board's 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies in the San Francisco Bay Region.

The project site is partially within the drinking water watershed of Cuesta La Honda Guild (Guild watershed), which diverts water from Mindego Creek to supply drinking water to the Town of La Honda.

Erosion and sedimentation issues currently persist on the project site due to drainage issues associated with onsite roads and trails. A Road and Trail Inventory was conducted for the project site by Timothy Best, CEG, in November 2012. A total of 39 sites were inventoried along the 9.1 miles of roads. Inventoried sites included all stream crossings, areas of poor road drainage, and landslides. Of the 39 sites inventoried, 14 have a Moderate to High treatment priority and are recommended for some corrective measures to reduce the potential for sediment delivery or to repair damaged segments of the road. The principal issues with the roads in Mindego Ranch are:

- **Drainage:** Poor road drainage (lack of cross drains) has caused erosion and damage to the main Mindego Ranch Road. It has also been a contributing factor in several fill failures.
- **Weathering of the cutbank:** Roads that cross steep ground in grassland areas are prone to the raveling and sloughing of the cutbank. Without maintenance, material that is deposited on the roadway renders the road impassable.
- **Fill slope failures:** There are three road fill failures that have narrowed the road and where remedial measures are necessary to reopen the road or to widen the road for improved access. One of these failures is along Knuedler Lake Trail, and two are on East Mindego Ranch Road.
- **Stream Crossings:** There are eleven watercourse and swale crossings (2 culverts and 9 earth fords). The most significant problem is at plugged culvert where the road is blocked and the crossing fill is starting to wash out. Mitigation of this site is required to prevent further erosion and sediment discharge into the streams. Four other crossings have a moderate treatment priority to either reopen the road past them or to prevent outlet erosion.

3.9.2 DISCUSSION

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less-Than-Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. As discussed in the Environmental Setting above, there are erosion and sedimentation issues on the site associated with several sections of roads/trails in need of repair. As part of the Road and Trail Inventory (Best 2012) recommendations were made and are incorporated into the proposed U&M Plan. These recommendations/project components include installing reverse-grade dips and ditch relief culverts; rocking low-lying segments; replacing a failing culvert along Mindego Hill Trail; and regrading, widening, and installing reverse-grade dips on three critical ranch access roads. Implementation of these roadway improvements are anticipated to result in a long-term benefit to surface water quality by reducing erosion and sedimentation.

In addition to District Policies, runoff water quality is regulated by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program (established through the federal Clean Water Act). The NPDES program objective is to control and reduce pollutant discharges to surface water bodies. Compliance with NPDES permits is mandated by State and federal statutes and regulations. Locally, the NPDES Program is administered by the Water Board. According to the water quality control plans of the Water Board, any construction activities, including grading, that would result in the disturbance of one acre or more would require compliance with the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activity (Construction General

Permit). The project includes a total disturbance area of approximately three acres and would be subject to compliance with the Construction General Permit.

Current District-wide requirements protect water quality during maintenance activities. As outlined in the District's Best Management Practices and Standard Operating Procedures for Routine Maintenance Activities in Water Courses, which has been reviewed and approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the District follows specifications and guidelines designed to protect water quality. Additionally, maintenance work in watercourses will meet standards and be consistent with the current RWQCB Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for routine maintenance activities on District lands. These standards would be followed, as applicable, based on site conditions and specific project requirements.

In addition, no public vehicle access would be allowed on the project site. Only hikers and equestrians would be allowed on the site and only within a very limited area (See Exhibit 2-5). Therefore, there would be minimal erosion caused by the public's use of onsite roads and trails. Also, the number of cattle that would graze onsite would be limited by the specific stocking number identified in the Grazing Management Plan (SAGE Associated 2012), which varies depending on slope and other factors. This greatly reduces the potential for erosion due to overgrazing of the site.

The Coastal Protection Program EIR addressed impacts associated with water quality. The EIR concludes that the Coastal Protection Program project would result in overall benefit to the regions watersheds and water quality. However, the EIR also recognizes that the Santa Cruz Mountains are known for intense rainfall with large volume flows through creeks and drainages. The Coastal Protection Program area is windward of incoming storms and would receive intense rainfall capable of eroding and destabilizing project area trails. Roads and trails that are not properly maintained could cause substantial erosion or siltation on or off site. The Coastal Protection Program EIR includes mitigation measures to reduce any potential impacts associated with trail erosion. Consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR, impacts associated with the proposed project are considered *potentially significant* and the Coastal Protection Program EIR's mitigation measures are incorporated, as applicable. (Note that potential impacts associated with pathogens in surface water caused by proposed cattle grazing is discussed under "f" below.)

Mitigation Measure 3.9-1

- *Storm water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) as listed in this section shall be implemented to reduce potential water quality impacts. BMPs include (Coastal Protection Program EIR Mitigation HYD-1b):*
    - *Flow of runoff from drainage structures will be directed to vegetated areas, away from creeks and drainages as is practical.*
    - *Conduct any trail maintenance work during low flow periods*
    - *Use erosion and sediment control measures to minimize water quality impacts and ensure no sediment at heavily traveled trails flows into creeks. These measures include:*
        - *Silt Fences*
        - *Straw Bale Barriers*
        - *Brush or Rock Filters*
        - *Storm Drain Inlet Protection*

- *Sediment Traps*
- *Sediment Basins*
- *Erosion Control Blankets and Mats*
- *The District shall prevent erosion on steep slopes by using erosion control material according to manufacturer's specifications.*

o *If soil is to be stockpiled for any reason at creeksides, no run-off will be allowed to flow back to the creek.*

Significance after Mitigation

Consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR, implementing these mitigation measures would reduce the impacts to a *less-than-significant* level.

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project does not involve groundwater pumping or interference with groundwater recharge. Water infrastructure improvements associated with implementation of the conservation grazing program involve increased storage and distribution of an existing developed spring. Furthermore, the District acquired water rights with acquisition of the Mindego Ranch property, and water use on the site would be consistent with these rights. Impervious surfaces would not be added to the site, and groundwater recharge would not be adversely affected. Impacts associated with groundwater depletion and recharge would be *less than significant*.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation?

Less-Than-Significant. Overall, the proposed project seeks to maintain and improve the existing drainage patterns on the site. Impervious surfaces would not be added to the project site; therefore, the rate of runoff would not substantially increase. As described under "a" above, the proposed project includes measures to repair existing drainage issues associated with onsite roads. The project also incorporates mitigation measures from the Coastal Protection Program EIR, including trail design guidelines and BMPs. Removal of approximately 75 to 125 cubic yards of sediment from Big Spring pond would occur during the dry season and would be placed in a field north of the Upper Pond to dry. Once the sediment dries it would be spread into the field and reseeded with native species, spread on nearby roads, or otherwise naturalized and would not alter drainage patterns. The sediment in the field would naturally re-absorb into the soil, and the surrounding vegetation of the field would prevent transportation of silt into other onsite watercourses. Also, although the rate of stormwater would not increase under the proposed project, the proposed draining of Mindego Lake would result in dry-season runoff into nearby watercourses, which if done improperly, could result in erosion and siltation of nearby watercourses. The proposed project includes measures (see the SFGS Habitat Management Plan included as Appendix A) such as pumping water through multiple outlets onto a grassy slope using energy dissipaters and three lines of hay bales lined with filter fabric. Only clear water would be allowed to continue downstream into

the watershed. The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff such that on- or off-site erosion or siltation would occur. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding?

Less-Than-Significant. Impervious surfaces would not be added to the project site; therefore, the rate of runoff would not substantially increase. Overall, the proposed project seeks to maintain and improve the existing onsite drainage patterns. As described under "a" above, the proposed project incorporates mitigation measures from the Coastal Protection Program EIR, including trail design guidelines and BMPs. The proposed project also includes measures to repair existing drainage issues associated with onsite roads. The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff such that on- or off-site flooding would occur. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project would not adversely affect the drainage patterns or rate of runoff on the project site because the project seeks to maintain or improve the existing drainage patterns. As described under "a" above, the proposed project incorporates mitigation measures from the Coastal Protection Program EIR, including trail design guidelines and BMPs. The proposed project would not substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff such that exceedance of drainage system capacity would occur. This impact is *less than significant*.

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

Less-Than-Significant. Non-point source pollution results from land use practices where waste is not collected and disposed of in some identifiable manner. Non-point sources of pollution include: urban drainage, agricultural runoff, road construction activities, mining, grassland management, logging and other harvest activities, and natural sources such as effects of fire, flood, and landslide. Management of rangeland and cropland may have an effect upon water quality, but there is currently very little regulation. Agriculture operations need to be proactive in determining what standards are likely necessary and implementing their own monitoring protocols in order to determine whether they will be in compliance.

As mentioned above under Environmental Setting, the project site shares the Cuesta la Honda Guild watershed, which, during the wet season, diverts water from Mindego Creek to supply drinking water to the Town of La Honda. As described above, the proposed habitat restoration, roadway/trail improvements, and public access would not adversely affect water quality within the watershed. However, the proposed re-introduction of cattle grazing on the project site has raised some concerns regarding the drinking water supply.

All animal waste contains nutrients and may also contain pathogens. When animal wastes are concentrated (as is often the case in dairies and confined animal feeding operations) surface runoff can carry excess nutrients and pathogens into nearby water bodies. If not properly managed, livestock grazing also has the potential to lead to contamination of surface waters. As described in Section 2 "Project Description," *Cryptosporidium* is a pathogenic protozoan, spread via cysts produced primarily in newborn calves. *Cryptosporidium* can enter surface waters through contact with the waste from infected animals, provided that the waste is fresh or has not fully dried (Atwill 1998). If consumed by humans the microorganism can potentially cause intestinal

infections in sensitive populations. Contamination of the water supply with these cysts could trigger the need for costly water treatment procedures to be put in place.

As described in Section 2 "Project Description," in addition to the natural features of the project site, such as dense vegetation and steep topography, that reduce cattle access to Mindego Creek, the proposed Grazing Plan includes several measures to keep cattle away from water sources, including strategic placement of water troughs and salt licks away from water bodies, as well as installation of exclusionary fencing. The proposed Grazing Plan would also prevent overgrazing by active monitoring and management, which further reduces potential for cysts to enter waterways. (See Appendix B, Grazing Plan.)

To further minimize the potential for contamination of the Guild's water supply, the following measures are included in the proposed U&M Plan:

- Cattle would be excluded from the Mindego Creek watershed via a system of fencing and existing natural barriers (dense vegetation and steep topography) during the period the Guild draws water from Mindego Creek . This period extends from September 1 through May 31 (except during the 2-day processing period; see below), encompassing the typical rainy season *as well as* a precautionary buffer. This measure will avoid the potential for pathogens which may be present in cattle excrement to be carried to Mindego Creek via rainwater runoff.
- Regular monitoring will be performed by MROSD staff and the grazing tenant during the rainy season to ensure that no cattle have entered the Mindego Creek watershed. Additional fencing will be installed wherever and whenever existing barriers are found to be ineffective.
- During processing, typically spanning a 2 day period in winter, cattle will be confined to a secure holding field and corral along the southern border of the Mindego Creek watershed. No cattle will be moved into the holding field or corral if or when precipitation (rain) occurs or is forecasted with greater than a 70 percent probability in the next 72-hour period to prevent fecal material from entering the water via surface runoff. The holding field and corral vicinity will be monitored regularly by District staff or other appointed personnel for signs of concentrated surface water flow (e.g., gullies and rills). If such signs are detected, the District will ensure that proper drainage improvements are installed to prevent concentrated flows from the area into the watershed.
- Cattle water troughs and salt/mineral supplement will be located at least 800 feet away from surface water bodies to disperse cattle and other wildlife away from wetland and riparian areas (see Exhibit 2-4).
- Supplemental feeding will not be allowed, except in the following circumstances: 1) Distribution of supplements (vitamins, minerals, protein) to aid in the achievement of District resource management goals, livestock health and livestock movement and 2) feeding in the corral/holding pen (when cattle are off loaded and held or shipped from the premises. Any hay should be locally sourced.
- Stocking rates identified in the Grazing Management Plan will be adjusted as necessary to maintain appropriate Residual Dry Matter (RDM) standards. Annual monitoring of RDM shall by conducted by the District rangeland ecologist.
- The District will continue to implement the feral pig reduction program, which has been effective in reducing the feral pig populations. (Note that feral pigs currently occur in the area and are also a potential source of *Cryptosporidium*. Reducing pig populations in the watershed reduces existing potential for contamination of the water supply, reduces the risk of disease transmission to domestic livestock, protects native vegetation and sensitive habitat areas and is a an overall benefit to the project.)

Implementation of these project components, in combination with the natural barricades to water courses, would minimize the potential for cysts to migrate into surface water used for potable supply. The monitoring measures would ensure no significant risk to humans associated with *Cryptosporidium* from proposed onsite cattle. The impact would be *less than significant*.

g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include any new housing or other structures. Furthermore, the project site is located over 700 feet above sea level and is not located within or near a flood zone. Therefore, there would be *no impact* related to flood hazards and housing.

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. As indicated under "g" above, the proposed project does not include any structures and the project site is not located within the 100-year flood zone. Therefore there would be *no impact* associated with impeding or redirecting flood flows.

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

Less-Than-Significant. Public access would not be provided near onsite stream channels. In addition, staff would not typically access the project site during a heavy storm event. Impacts from exposure to flooding would be *less than significant*.

j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

Less-Than-Significant. The project site is more than 700 feet above sea level at its lowest point. Seiche or tsunamis from the Pacific Ocean are located too far away to impact the site. The soil conditions and potential for prolonged rain events have the potential to produce mudflows. A mudflow could expose District personnel or members of the general public to potentially life threatening situations if they were present while a mudflow event occurred. As described in the Coastal Protection Program EIR (p. Page IV-H-8), the low probability of such an event and the limited likelihood of District personnel or the public to be in harm's way during an intense storm necessary to precipitate such an event reduce this potential impact to a *less than significant* level.

3.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. Land Use and Planning. Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.10.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is located in the rural western portion of unincorporated San Mateo County in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The property is currently used as an open space preserve and for agricultural operations. There are no occupied structures within the project site boundaries; therefore there is no established residential community located within the vicinity of the proposed roadway/trail and habitat improvements.

The San Mateo County General Plan designates the Preserve as Open Space, Public Recreation and Timber Production, which allow for resource management, recreation and agricultural uses. The Preserve is zoned RM (Resource Management), RM-CZ/CD (Resource Management – Coastal Zone) and TPZ (Timberland Preserve Zone). These zoning designations provide for park, open space and recreational uses.

The San Mateo County Trails Plan identifies the project area as a route for the Harrington Creek Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

3.10.2 DISCUSSION

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. There are no occupied structures on the project site; therefore, no established community exists within the immediate vicinity of the proposed improvements. The community of La Honda is located approximately one mile to the west of the project site. Because the proposed project would be an extension of an existing open space preserve, and is located in a rural area used primarily for agriculture, timber production, grazing, and open space uses, the proposed project would not divide an established community. Consistent with the conclusion of the San Mateo Coastal Protection Program EIR, the project would result in *no impact*.

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project site is designated as General Open Space and Timber Protection by the San Mateo County General Plan. The purpose of the General Open Space land use designation is to ensure maintenance of open space character and protection of natural resources, and generally to direct new development to existing rural service centers. The purpose of the Timber Production designation is to protect productive timber resources. The proposed project will result in permanent protection of the site for open space, compatible agriculture, and natural resource management, which is consistent with these General Plan designations.

Use and management of the project site as an open space preserve with on-going livestock grazing operations is also consistent with the County's Resource Management (RM) and Timber Preserve Zone (TPZ) zoning designations. The project proposes to use the property for habitat and watershed management, livestock raising and grazing, and docent-led low intensity recreation, all compatible uses within the RM and TPZ Zoning Districts. (See Section 3.2 "Agricultural and Forest Resources" for a more detailed discussion regarding consistency with agricultural designations and policies, including WA contracts.)

The project would operate and would be managed in conformity with the provisions of the Service Plan for the Coastside Protection Program, which sets forth guidelines to help inform the District's decision-making and delivery of District services within the Coastal Protection Program area in which the project site is located. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant impact associated with land use plan/policy conflict.

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

No Impact. The proposed project does not contain areas subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural communities conservation plan. *No impact* would result.

3.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. Mineral Resources. Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.11.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Mineral Resource Zone-2 (MRZ-2) indicates the existence of a deposit that meets certain criteria for value and marketability. According to the County of San Mateo General Plan, the project site is not located in an area designated MRZ-2, although the General Plan does indicate that there is a limestone deposit on the southeast portion of the project site (San Mateo County 1985).

3.11.2 DISCUSSION

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. According to the San Mateo General Plan, the project site is not located in an area designated MRZ-2 (San Mateo County 1985). The proposed roadway/trail and habitat improvements would not limit the ability to access the limestone deposit identified by the San Mateo General Plan. The Coastal Protection Program EIR indicates that implementation of the Service Plan would result in no impacts to Mineral Resources. Consistent with the EIR's conclusion, the proposed project would result in *no impact*.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. See the discussion under "a" above. Although the San Mateo General Plan identifies a limestone deposit on the site, the proposed improvements would not limit the availability of the mineral resource. Consistent with the conclusion of the Coastal Protection Program EIR, the proposed project would result in *no impact*.

3.12 NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. Noise. Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.12.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Existing conditions are governed by the presence of noise-sensitive receptors, the location and type of noise sources, and overall ambient levels. Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to consist of those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where a quiet setting is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Additional parks and recreation areas are also generally considered sensitive to increases in exterior noise levels. These noise-sensitive land uses are also considered vibration-sensitive.

The project site is located two miles east of the community of La Honda in the Santa Cruz Mountains, within unincorporated San Mateo County (See Exhibit 2-1). The project site lies near the headwaters of Mindego Creek and Alpine Creek and is approximately 1 mile west of the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

There are no sensitive receptors located on the project site, only two vacant single-family residences and a barn. The nearest offside sensitive receptors include residential properties located approximately 1,500 feet to the south of Knuedler Lake and approximately 2,500 feet to the northeast of the existing onsite structures. (Camp Glenwood, a male youth correctional facility, is located over 0.5-mile to the west of Knuedler Lake and approximately 1.5 miles west of the existing onsite structures.)

The existing noise environment is primarily influenced by vehicle traffic from surrounding roadways. The level of vehicle traffic could vary depending on the size of the nearby roadway and time of the day (i.e., peak traffic hours). Other noise sources that may contribute to the existing noise environment consist of human activity from low-impact recreational activities (e.g., sightseeing, hiking, biking, horseback riding) taking place nearby, noise from nearby residential neighborhoods (e.g., landscape maintenance, dogs barking, people talking), aircraft flyover, and natural sounds such as leaves rustling and birds chirping.

San Mateo County has established noise guidelines and standards to protect citizens from potential hearing damage and other adverse physiological and social effects associated with noise. Applicable policies and regulations are contained in the San Mateo Zoning Regulations.

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO ZONING REGULATIONS

SECTION 6163.6 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

All uses, facilities and operations must conform to the following performance standards:

1. **Noise**. No use, facility or operation shall create any unusually loud, uncommon noise which would disturb the neighborhood peace.

The maximum noise level permitted, measured at the building site boundary, shall be:

Time of Day	Maximum Noise Level (dBA)		
	30 Minutes in Any Hour	15 Minutes in Any Hour	5 Minutes in Any Hour
7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	55	60	65
10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	50	55	60

Short-term construction noise may exceed these standards, providing that all construction activities are limited between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

3.12.2 DISCUSSION

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project would result in demolition of existing structures and various site improvements such as installing new troughs for livestock, new PVC water lines, , and installing a new gate at the Mindego Ranch main entrance. In addition, a new electric solar pump for conveying water to livestock troughs would be installed. Solar electric motors are not typically considered noise generating equipment and would not be audible at the nearest offsite sensitive receptors (i.e., residences located approximately 1,500 feet to the south of the nearest potential construction site). This noise source is not discussed further.

Demolition, construction, and maintenance activities associated with onsite improvements would result in the loudest noise levels. Noise would result from the use of heavy construction equipment during the demolition of existing structures, which will be minimal (i.e., three residential structures already in a dilapidated state), construction, and maintenance of proposed site improvements (e.g., new troughs for livestock, PVC water lines, , installing a new gate at the Mindego Ranch main gate, road erosion treatment such as installing reverse grade-dips and ditch relief culverts, and re-grading and widening access roads).

The site preparation phase typically generates the most substantial noise levels because the onsite equipment associated with grading, compacting, and excavation are the noisiest. Proposed site preparation activities include demolition, road re-grading, widening, and vegetation clearing. These activities could require some earth movement and truck hauling. Therefore, noise-generating equipment that would likely be used includes dozers, haul trucks, and loaders. Reference noise levels for these types of equipment are shown below in Table 3.12-1 and noise level estimates are shown in Appendix E.

Table 3.12-1 Equipment Reference Noise Levels

Type of Equipment	Noise Level (L_{max}) at 50 feet
Dozer	85
Dump Truck	84
Front End Loader	80

Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2013

Noise generated from these pieces of equipment would be intermittent and short in duration as typical use is characterized by short periods of full-power operation followed by extended periods of operation at lower power, idling, or powered-off conditions. However, as a worst-case scenario, if these pieces of equipment were to operate at full capacity for an entire hour, noise levels could reach up to 49 dBA L_{max} at the nearest offsite sensitive receptors located approximately 1,500 feet to the south of a potential construction area. This worst-case (and highly unlikely) scenario would not exceed the most stringent San Mateo County noise standard of 55 dBA L_{max} for any 30 minute period during the daytime (i.e., 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and if construction or maintenance activities were to take place outside of the less sensitive hours of the day (i.e., 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.), this noise level would not exceed the most stringent San Mateo County noise standard of 50 dBA L_{max} for any 30 minute period during the nighttime hours (i.e., 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). Overall, these activities would be spread out over a 10-year period as funding becomes available (except for demolition, which would occur shortly after the project decision) and therefore noise-generating activities would generally not overlap and construction noise generation would be minimal as they occur. Noise generating construction and maintenance activities would not reach levels that exceed applicable noise standards. Thus, proposed noise-generating activities would not expose nearby noise sensitive receptors to excessive noise levels. This would be a *less-than-significant* impact.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

No Impact. The proposed project could involve the use of some heavy-duty construction equipment for various site improvement activities. These activities include, primarily the demolition of few existing structures and the site preparation and digging for new piping, as well as some ongoing maintenance and improvements to access roads and trails. No heavy impact equipment such as drilling or blasting would occur. The types of construction activities that are proposed include minimal site disturbance and are not the types of activities that could result in excessive ground vibrations and, therefore, the proposed project would not expose people to excessive ground vibration. The project would result in *no impact*.

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

No Impact. Major proposed long-term maintenance and operation activities would include road erosion treatment and habitat restoration, as well as public access to the site.

The noise from visitors to the project site (i.e., human speech and laughter) would be limited to the public access areas, which are located centrally on the site in the same general area that construction noise would occur (1,500 feet from the nearest residence), and would be far quieter than construction equipment. Likewise, the visitors would only access the site during daytime hours. Therefore, because the public access would generate much less noise than construction, and construction, as described under "a" above, would not generate substantial noise, the limited noise generated by visitors to the site would also not result in substantial noise at sensitive receptor locations.

Road erosion treatment projects would include installing reverse-grade dips and ditch relief culverts, rocking low-lying segments, replacing a failing culvert along the Mindego Hill Trail, as well as re-grading, widening, and installing reverse-grade dips on three critical ranch access roads. Additional maintenance activities include landfill closure, signage, restriction enforcement, and slope monitoring and trail maintenance actions, grazing responsibilities, and invasive species control. As described above under "a" the proposed construction and maintenance activities would be minimal and intermittent over time (i.e., ongoing for the next 10 years). In addition, these activities would not result in noise levels that exceed any applicable San Mateo County noise standard and therefore would not expose any nearby sensitive receptors to excessive noise levels. No new stationary noise sources or land development would be included in the proposed project. Therefore, the project would not result in any permanent increase in ambient noise levels. There would be *no impact.*

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less-Than-Significant. As discussed under "a" above, the proposed project would involve the use of some noise-generating construction equipment. These types of noise-generating equipment do not operate for extended periods of time and would not exceed any applicable San Mateo County noise standard, during the daytime or the nighttime. Therefore, this temporary increase in ambient noise would not result in a significant increase in noise levels at sensitive receptors. This impact would be *less than significant.*

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

Response for Items e and f.

Less-Than-Significant. There are multiple airports in San Mateo County (e.g., San Francisco International Airport, Half Moon Bay Airport, and San Carlos Airport), however based on the San Mateo County Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan, the project site is not included in the planning area (or influence areas) as defined by this plan (City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County 1996). The project site is not located within 2 miles of any other public airport. Additionally, the proposed project would not include any new residential land uses or permanent structures where people would live or work. It should be noted that there is a small private (dirt) airstrip located approximately 1.75 miles northwest of the project site. Only small aircraft utilize this strip and the use is infrequent. Therefore, because the project site is not located within close proximity to an airport, and the nearby airstrip would not generate substantial noise due to size and frequency of aircraft, the proposed project would not expose people to excessive noise levels from airports. The impact would be *less than significant*.

3.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. Population and Housing. Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing homes, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.13.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

According to the US Census Bureau, in 2010 San Mateo County's population totaled 718,451 with 271,333 total housing units and an occupation rate of 2.72 persons per household. (US Census Bureau 2012) Located in the unincorporated area of San Mateo County, the Preserve and the surrounding area are sparsely populated, with housing consisting mostly of rural residences, farmhouses, and estates.

3.13.2 DISCUSSION

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project does not include construction of new housing or commercial business. Therefore, no direct population growth would result from implementation of the proposed project. No additional permanent staff would be needed for operation and maintenance of the proposed project.

Although providing additional public open space would better accommodate the existing and future recreational needs of the region, open space is not considered "infrastructure" that can support housing/business growth. These types of infrastructure typically include facilities such as roadways, pipelines, and treatment facilities, which facilitate development. For example, in areas where wastewater treatment is provided exclusively by septic systems, which require a substantial amount of space for leach fields, extension of a sewer line to such an area could facilitate (space necessary for leach fields) higher density development. Opening new open space areas to public use and implementing other components of the proposed Use and Management Plan would not result in infrastructure-support facilities and would neither remove nor create such a barrier to growth. Implementation of the proposed Use and Management Plan would provide a higher quality of life for existing and future residences and visitors of the region. This impact is *less than significant*.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing homes, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Less-Than-Significant. Implementation of the proposed project would involve demolition of two unoccupied single-family residences and associated structures. These structures are in state of disrepair and are not fit for habitation. Therefore, removal of these unoccupied residential structures would not require construction of replacement housing. The impact is *less than significant*.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. As described under "b" above, existing residences proposed for demolition are currently unoccupied and are in a condition that renders them unfit for habitation. Removal of these structures would not displace any existing residents and there would be *no impact*.

3.14 PUBLIC SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. Public Services. Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The District participates in fire protection of the Preserve in collaboration with other agencies, and primarily relies on the jurisdictional fire agencies of CAL FIRE/County of San Mateo Fire Department (CAL FIRE/County Fire) and La Honda Fire Brigade, with first response and support to the jurisdictional fire agencies by District staff. Through CALFIRE's Cooperative Fire Protection Program, San Mateo County has contracted with CALFIRE for Fire Protection since 1962. CAL FIRE/County Fire responds to wildland fires, structure fires, medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous material spills, swift water rescues, cliff rescues, floods, civil disturbances, and earthquakes. CAL FIRE/County Fire operates five fire engines out of four county owned fire stations. These five engines are each staffed with three firefighters, one of which is a paramedic. Additionally, in declared fire season, one wildland engine is staffed at three of those stations, and one bulldozer is staffed at the headquarters station (in San Mateo) (San Mateo County 2012).

La Honda Fire Brigade (also called Volunteer Company 57) is a part of the 911 system within the County Fire System. La Honda Fire Brigade, which operates out of Station 57 located at 8945 La Honda Road (within two miles from the project site), is a Basic Life Support Engine Company and responds to several types of non-law-enforcement emergencies, including structure fires, wildland fires, medical aid, vehicle accidents, cliff rescues, hazardous materials incidents, confined space and trench rescues, swift water rescues, as well as several types of storm-related emergencies. La Honda Fire has 16 current members with an authorized strength of 20. The company has two senior officers (a Chief and an Assistant Chief) and three supervising officers (a Captain and two Lieutenants) (La Honda Fire 2012).

The District maintains a fire program to assist these agencies with fire response. If a fire occurs on or is threatening District lands, District staff helps establish Incident Command if first on scene, evacuates or closes the Preserves for visitor safety, performs initial attack when safe and effective to do so, provides logistical assistance given staff knowledge of the property, monitors and attacks spot fires, and supplies additional water

for primary agency engines. The District operates a maintenance-style water truck for use in providing water for fire suppression.

POLICE PROTECTION

District rangers are peace officers authorized to carry out duties in patrolling District preserves to promote visitor safety and provide for the protection of the natural resources of the preserves. The District has a total of 25 badged rangers (who have attended a District approved Academy and wear a peace officer badge). In an emergency, any or all of these personnel could be summoned to assist at an incident. The San Mateo Sheriff's Department is the primary jurisdictional law enforcement agency that provides law enforcement service to unincorporated areas of San Mateo County, including the project site. District staff is responsible for enforcing District regulations most importantly pertaining to vandalism, bicycle speed, bicycle helmets, dogs off leash, dogs in closed area, and parking, whereas the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department is primarily responsible for criminal enforcement and all other code sections.

SCHOOLS

The project site is located within the La Honda Pescadero Unified School District. The nearest school is La Honda Elementary School, located at the end of Sears Ranch Road, over 1.5 miles west of the project site boundary..

PARKS

Several large open space preserves are located in the vicinity of the project site and the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, including the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (District Preserve located approximately 2 miles west of the site), Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (District Preserve located approximately 2 miles north of the site), Sam MacDonald and Pescadero Creek County Parks (located approximately 1 mile southwest of the site), and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (District Preserve located approximately 2 miles east of the site), and Wunderlich County Park (located just north of the site).

3.14.2 DISCUSSION

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project would decrease risk of wildland fire due to the re-introduction of grazing on the property, which would reduce onsite fuels by controlling vegetation during the fire season, and also due to the demolition of existing dilapidated structures. The proposed project would not increase fire risk because public vehicle access, camping, open fires, camp stoves, and fireworks would be prohibited. See Section 3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials, which includes mitigation measures to further reduce impacts related to wildand fire. Implementation of the proposed project would not increase the need for fire protection service such that new or expanded fire service facilities would be necessary. In addition, the proposed project is currently owned by the District and would not affect response times or other performance objectives. The impact would be *less than significant*.

Police protection?

Less-Than-Significant. Law enforcement service in the vicinity of the project site is currently provided by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department (criminal) and District rangers (resource protection). Implementation of the proposed Use and Management Plan would provide limited expansion of public access to areas that are not currently accessed by the public. No structures would be developed on the project site. Most emergency responses would be handled internally by District staff and would not tax other law enforcement agencies. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in increased demand for police protection such that new or expanded facilities are necessary to maintain current service levels. This impact is *less than significant*.

Schools?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include development of new residences and therefore would not result in a substantial effect on the permanent population in the area that would increase the demand for educational services. Implementation of the proposed project would have *no impact* on schools.

Parks?

Less-Than-Significant. Implementation of the proposed project would provide additional publicly-accessible open space and limited trails (the 0.05-mile existing POST circle driveway). The POST circle driveway is a dead-end trail and does not provide connection to other parks and open space preserves in the area would therefore not increase demand for other parks and open space facilities, such that new or expanded facilities would be required. This impact is *less than significant*.

Other public facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include development of new residences and therefore would not result in a substantial effect on the permanent population in the area that would increase the demand for other services such as libraries, community centers, etc. Implementation of the project would have *no impact* on these other services.

3.15 RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. Recreation. Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.15.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

As mentioned in Section 3.14 "Public Services" above, there are several large open space preserves and parks located in the vicinity of the project site and the Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve, including the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (District Preserve located approximately 2 miles west of the site), Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (District Preserve located approximately 2 miles north of the site), Sam MacDonald and Pescadero Creek County Parks (located approximately 1 mile southwest of the site), and Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (District Preserve located approximately 2 miles east of the site), and Wunderlich County Park (located just north of the site).

3.15.2 DISCUSSION

a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Less-Than-Significant. As mentioned above in Section 3.14 Public Services, the proposed project would provide additional open space and trails (the 0.05-mile POST circle driveway) to the public. The proposed access to the existing POST circle driveway would not provide connection to other parks and open space preserves in the area would therefore not increase demand for other parks and open space facilities, such that new or expanded facilities would be required. This impact is *less than significant*.

b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Less-Than-Significant. See the discussion under "a" above. The proposed project would not increase demand for other parks and open space facilities, such that new or expanded facilities would be required and would therefore result in a *less than significant* impact.

3.16 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. Transportation/Traffic. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.16.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project site is not accessible by any public roadway. Visitors to the project site would access the site by hiking or riding horseback on Mindego Ridge Trail. Vehicle parking would be provided by the future staging area on Alpine Road that was approved as part of the adjacent Mindego Gateway project.

3.16.2 DISCUSSION

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project provides a trail extension and limited public access onto the Mindego Ranch site. It is not anticipated that the proposed public access to the POST circle driveway would attract substantial additional visitation. No additional District staff are necessary for the proposed project. The cattle ranching operation would result in only a few vehicle trips per week (e.g., no more than 2 one-way trips per day). Therefore, no substantial vehicle trip generation would result. The proposed project would not substantially affect the performance of the circulation system and would therefore not conflict with any applicable transportation plans, ordinances, or policies. The project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact.

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

Less-Than-Significant. See discussion under "a" above. The proposed project would generate minimal vehicle trips. Therefore the project would not conflict with a congestion management plan, including level of service standards and other standards for roadway/highway congestion management. The impact is *less than significant*.

c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project does not involve development of any tall structures and would not alter air traffic patterns. The proposed project would result in *no impact*.

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

No Impact. No vehicle access would be provided to the project site. Therefore, no traffic hazards would result. The proposed project would result in *no impact*.

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less-Than-Significant. To further mitigate the proposed project's impacts associated with wildland fire, Mitigation Measure 3.8-2a (See Section 3.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials) requires appropriate emergency access features, including 12-foot-wide gates and 10-foot-radius turnarounds at trailheads. These measures would ensure appropriate emergency vehicle access. The impact is *less than significant*.

f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

Less-Than-Significant. As mentioned above under "a", the proposed project includes limited trail extension and is not expected to substantially affect the number of visitors that would utilize the existing trail network. Therefore, demand for bicycle facilities and other alternative modes of transportation would not be substantially affected by the proposed project. The impact is *less than significant*.

3.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. Utilities and Service Systems. Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.17.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The two existing onsite residential structures are unoccupied. No active utilities service is currently provided at the project site. Stormwater run-off drains naturally. There is no municipal or other formal drainage system; however, culverts and other drainage facilities convey stormwater flow across or through roadways.

The District does not provide regular trash collection services. District ordinance requires users to dispose of refuse brought to the RROSP and prohibits public littering or dumping of any material onto the Preserve. Illegal trash is removed from the Preserve by District staff and properly disposed of.

3.17.2 DISCUSSION

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

No Impact. No restrooms are included as part of the proposed project. No wastewater would be generated. The proposed project would result in *no impact* related to wastewater treatment requirements.

b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact. See discussion under "a" above. The proposed project would result in *no impact* related to construction of new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities.

c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less-Than-Significant. For the most part, drainage of stormwater runoff occurs naturally on the project site, with the exception of features such as culverts that convey drainage through roadways. The proposed project involves drainage improvements to prevent erosion and improve water quality, installing reverse-grade dips and ditch relief culverts; rocking low-lying segments; replacing a failing culvert along Mindego Hill Trail; and regrading, widening, and installing reverse-grade dips on three critical ranch access roads. Environmental impacts associated with these improvements are evaluated in this IS. Impacts associated with installing these drainage facilities are *less than significant*.

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

No Impact. No potable water would be available at the project site. Water for cattle troughs would be pumped from onsite springs into proposed water tanks. No water service is required for implementation of the project. Therefore, the proposed project would result in *no impact* related to water supply capacity.

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact. See discussion under "a" above. The proposed project would result in *no impact* related to wastewater treatment capacity.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

Less-Than-Significant. A number of dilapidated structures and remnant ranching facilities are proposed for demolition and removal. Demolition of these structures would generate solid waste. Material would be recycled to the greatest extent possible and otherwise hauled to appropriate disposal facilities. Any hazardous material would be abated first per state requirements (see Section 3.9 "Hazards and Hazardous Materials") and would be disposed of at appropriate hazardous waste disposal facilities. The volume of solid waste generated during demolition would not be substantial.

As mentioned under the Environmental Setting, the District does not provide regular trash collection services. Visitors are required to dispose of their own trash. The District prohibits public littering or dumping of any material onto the Preserve. District staff removes any illegal trash, which is typically not substantial in volume, and properly disposes of it. Because implementation of the proposed Master Plan involves very limited generation of solid waste, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with solid waste regulations and impacts to landfills will be *less-than-significant*.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less-Than-Significant. As described under "f" above, the proposed project involves very limited solid waste generation and would not conflict with federal, state, and local statutes or regulations related to solid waste. The impact is *less than significant*.

3.18 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII.	**Mandatory Findings of Significance.**				
a)	Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b)	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c)	Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083, 21083.5.
Reference: Government Code Sections 65088.4.
Public Resources Code Sections 21080, 21083.5, 21095; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

3.18.1 DISCUSSION

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less-Than-Significant. As described in the biological resources analysis of this IS (Section 3.4), implementation of the proposed project, including mitigation measures included in this IS/MND, would result in less-than-significant impacts related to biological resources. Natural Resource Management is one of the overarching goals of the proposed project, including protecting and enhancing habitat and wildlife populations. The

proposed project does not have the potential to substantially degrade fish or wildlife habitat, adversely affect wildlife populations, or restrict the range of special-status species. Also, as indicated in the cultural resources analysis of this IS (Section 3.5), implementation of the proposed project would not adversely affect existing historic structures and mitigation measures would prevent substantial adverse effects to unknown archaeological resources or human remains. These impacts are considered *less than significant*.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project includes very little soil disturbance and does not include construction of new structures or substantial impervious surfaces. The proposed project is designed to protect and enhance existing natural and cultural resources. As indicated throughout this IS/MND, implementation of the proposed project would not result in any individually significant impact. In addition, the effects of the proposed project would not combine with the effects of other past, present, or future projects in a cumulatively considerable fashion. The cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project are *less than significant*.

c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less-Than-Significant. The proposed project does not include any new sources of pollution and would not generally involve the use, handling, or transport of hazardous materials. Demolition of existing structures would be carried out in compliance with existing OSHA and BAAQMD standards for handling of hazardous building materials such as asbestos and lead. This impact is *less than significant*.

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5 LIST OF PREPARERS

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