



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-16-48
April 20, 2016

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM

La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan Phase I Implementation – Trails and Interim Parking in the Lower La Honda Creek Area

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *SGM*

1. Provide input on proposed Phase I priority actions, including construction of a gravel parking area, and opening the main ranch access road to hiking and equestrian use.
2. Consider an amendment to the Board-approved Master Plan to open one new mile of an existing ranch road as a hiking and equestrian trail to provide an early loop opportunity in the former Folger Ranch area and recommend forwarding to the full Board for review and approval.

SUMMARY

The 2012 La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan includes phased public access to the lower portion of the Preserve (the former Driscoll Ranch). Staff will provide an informational update on the implementation of planned staging areas and trails, which was approved as part of the 2012 Master Plan, including conceptual designs for the Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking Area. In addition, the General Manager recommends amending the Master Plan at this time to include the opening of a one-mile ranch road to hiking and equestrian to provide a loop trail off the main ranch road in the former Folger Ranch area.

MEASURE AA

As part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 Action Plan and Budget, the Board directed the General Manager to proceed with implementation of the Sears Ranch Loop Trail and Interim Parking Area to open the Lower La Honda Creek Area of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to public access. These projects are part of Measure AA Portfolio #7, La Honda Creek: Driscoll Ranch Public Access, Endangered Wildlife Protection and Conservation Grazing, with a total funding allocation of \$14.825 Million.

BACKGROUND

The La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan was approved by the Board in 2012 following an extensive public input process, which included newsletters, public workshops,

focus group meetings, stakeholder interviews, and tours of the Preserve. The Board-approved Master Plan prioritizes natural resource stewardship actions, a number of which have been implemented, including a conservation grazing program for the former Driscoll Ranch, pond enhancements to support California red-legged frog, road improvements to reduce erosion, and riparian habitat protection. The Master Plan also includes upgrades to existing ranch roads and construction of new trails to open new Preserve areas to hiking, equestrian, and limited mountain biking, which will be implemented in phases over the next 25 years through Measure AA and other funding.

DISCUSSION

La Honda Creek Master Plan Phase I public access projects (Attachment 1) include the Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking Area and road and trail improvements to allow approximately five miles of the main ranch road to open to hiking and equestrian use. Public access projects are described below and will be presented at an informational neighborhood meeting on April 20. Demolition of unsafe and remnant structures and other clean-up actions for public safety are under evaluation and are expected to be brought to the PNR Committee for review and confirmation in late Spring 2016.

Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking Area

Per the Board-approved Master Plan, a small, gravel parking area will be installed at the Sears Ranch Road Preserve entrance in Lower La Honda Creek. A larger permanent parking area will be constructed as needed in a later phase. Conceptual designs for the interim parking area include:

- Capacity for 9-12 vehicles (no horse trailers; equestrian parking is currently provided by permit at the event center property)
- A standard single vault toilet
- Drainage improvements to control stormwater runoff
- District wayfinding and grazing signage
- Replacement of current entrance gate with an automatic gate
- Additional gates and fencing to integrate the parking lot and trailhead into the grazing operation

Phase I Trails

Master Plan Phase I Trails implementation includes the following actions:

- Open approximately 5 miles of the main ranch road to hiking and equestrian use. The last, 1-mile segment of road would remain closed except via permit, to minimize the potential for illegal or unsafe parking on Highway 84 (see Attachment 1).
- Continue use of the event center property for permit-only equestrian parking. The ranch road segment connecting the event center would be available to permit holders to access the open trail.
- Restrict off-trail use for an interim period (3-5 years) to allow for additional access improvements to be implemented and facilitate integration of public access and the active cattle grazing operation.
- Do not allow bike access at this time, pending completion of the “La Honda Creek Loop Trail”, or a through-connection to the Red Barn area in a future phase, per the Master Plan.

- Do not allow dog access at this time, pending identification, Board approval, and construction of a suitable trail loop off Sears Ranch Road, working in close coordination with the existing grazing tenant to avoid potential issues with the active grazing operation, also per the Master Plan.
- **PROPOSED MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT:** In addition to the opening of Master Plan Phase I trails, the General Manager recommends opening approximately one mile of an existing ranch road as a trail to hiking and equestrian use to provide a loop opportunity in the former Folger Ranch area. This road segment was not originally included in the Master Plan given its condition at that time, but since then has been substantially improved to correct sedimentation problems, and with minimal additional work can be included to create an initial loop as part of the Phase I trail experience. Staff has coordinated with the grazing tenant regarding this additional trail to ensure that trail use would not adversely impact the grazing operation.

The Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking Lot and Phase I Trail Improvements are scheduled to be completed within approximately 18 months, allowing the Lower La Honda Creek area to be opened to hiking and equestrian use in the fall of 2017.

FISCAL IMPACT

For the Sears Ranch Road Interim Lot, \$104,000 is included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 Budget for design and engineering, and an additional \$179,900 is being requested in the proposed FY2016-17 Budget to complete construction of the Interim Parking Area during the summer of 2017. For improvements to the main ranch road, \$265,000 is being requested in the proposed FY2016-17 Budget for construction beginning in Fall 2016.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this Agenda Item was provided consistent with the Brown Act. Additional notice was provided to parties interested in the Master Plan including Coastside and neighbors living adjacent to La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking Area, road and trail projects, and associated public use were included as part of the La Honda Creek Master Plan Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration. If recommended by the Committee, the additional trail segment in the former Folger Ranch Area will be subject to CEQA as part of the Board approval process. To avoid delays to the proposed implementation schedule and the 2017 Preserve opening, implementation of the interim parking area and the improvements along the main ranch road would proceed independent of the Board approval process for the new proposed trail loop.

NEXT STEPS

Following confirmation of the General Manager's recommendations and any additional Committee direction, staff and the consultant team will complete design development for the interim parking area and trails. A tentative schedule is provided below.

La Honda Creek Phase I Public Access schedule:

Task	Date
PNR Committee and Open House – Phase I Public Access Plan	April 20, 2016
PNR Committee – Lower La Honda Creek Area demolition and cleanup projects	May/June 2016
LFPAC Committee – Trail names	July 2016
Board Meeting – Trail names, approval of new additional trail	October 2016
Road and Trail Improvements	Summer 2016
Board Meeting – Construction Contract	Spring 2016
Interim Parking Area Construction, Road and Trail Improvements	Summer 2017
Lower La Honda Creek Area Opens to Public	Fall 2017

Attachments

1. La Honda Creek Phase I Public Access Projects

Responsible Department Head:

Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Manager

Prepared by:

Lisa Bankosh, Planner III

PUBLIC ACCESS TRAILS

listed in order by implementation phase

- ① Driscoll Ranch Main Access Road 5.6
- ② Easy Access Loop Trail 0.9
- ③ Vista Point Loop Trail 2.8
- ④ Trail Connection to Red Barn Area 0.3
- ⑤ Trail Connection to Driscoll Ranch 1.5
- ⑥ La Honda Creek Loop Trail 4.8
- ⑦ Redwood Cabin Loop Trail 2.3
- ⑧ Interior Loop Trail 2.4
- ⑨ Red Barn Loop Trail 2.0
- ⑩ Folger Ranch Loop Trail 3.9
- ⑪ Harrington Creek Trail 1.6
- ⑫ Sears Ranch Loop Trail 1.9
- ⑬ Trail to Ray's Peak 0.1

TRAIL USE



All trails open to hiking. Off-trail hiking allowed throughout except in Conservation Management Units.



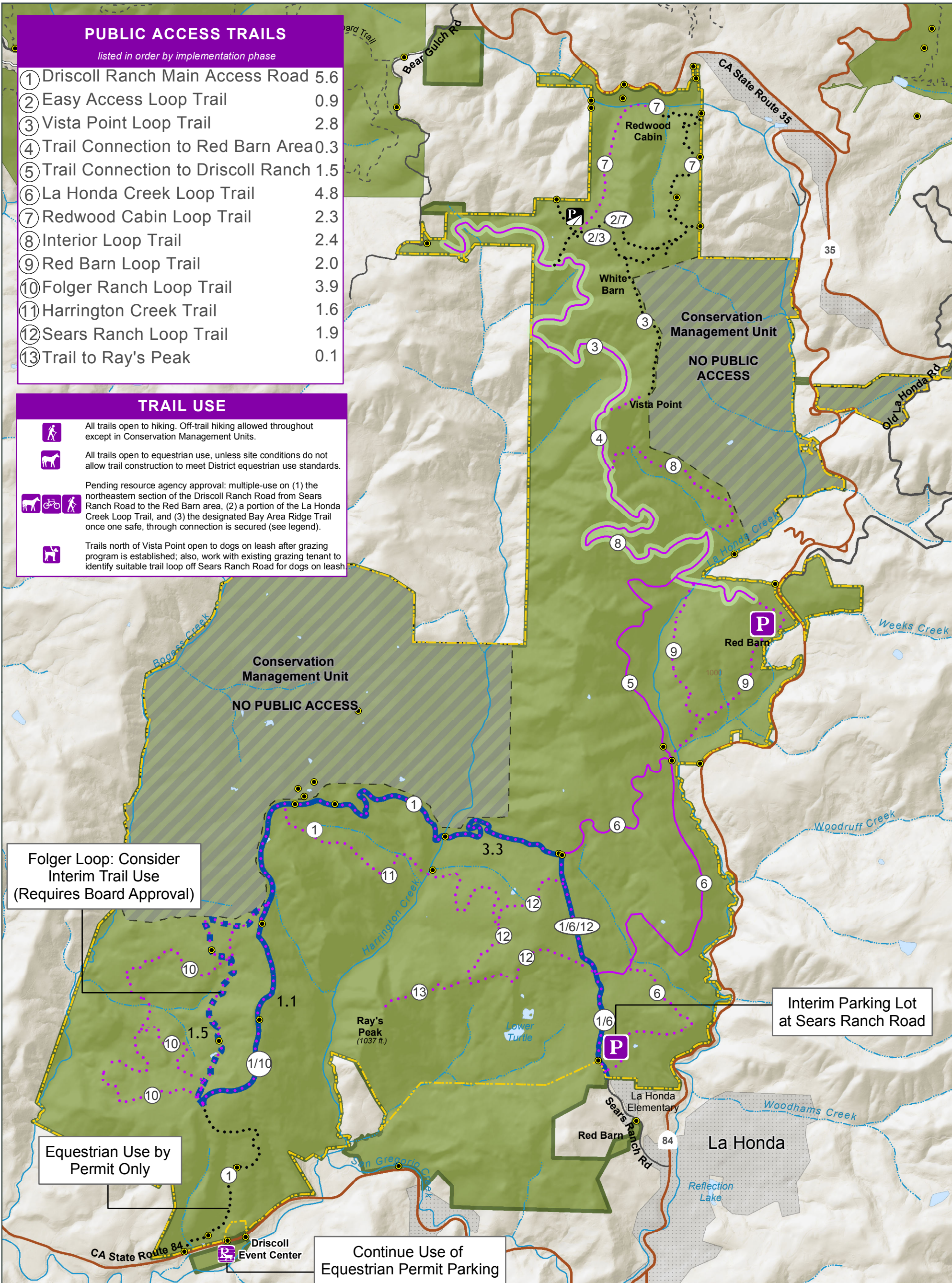
All trails open to equestrian use, unless site conditions do not allow trail construction to meet District equestrian use standards.



Pending resource agency approval: multiple-use on (1) the northeastern section of the Driscoll Ranch Road from Sears Ranch Road to the Red Barn area, (2) a portion of the La Honda Creek Loop Trail, and (3) the designated Bay Area Ridge Trail once one safe, through connection is secured (see legend).



Trails north of Vista Point open to dogs on leash after grazing program is established; also, work with existing grazing tenant to identify suitable trail loop off Sears Ranch Road for dogs on leash



Folger Loop: Consider Interim Trail Use (Requires Board Approval)

Interim Parking Lot at Sears Ranch Road

Equestrian Use by Permit Only

Continue Use of Equestrian Permit Parking

La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

Map Projection: UTM Zone 10N, NAD 1927
Data Sources: USGS, County of San Mateo, and MROSD

April, 2016

Feet 0 1,500 3,000

Public Access Phase I

Trails	Facilities	Land Use
●●●● Existing Public Trails (Permit Only, Hiking, Equestrian)	Existing Parking Area	Conservation Management Unit (No Public Access)
●●●● Proposed Public Trails (Hiking, Equestrian)	New Parking Area	La Honda Creek Master Plan Boundary
— Proposed Multiple-Use Public Trails (Hiking, Equestrian, Bicycling)	Permit Only Equestrian Parking Area	Preserve Boundary
— Phase I Trails: Main Ranch Road (Hiking, Equestrian)	Gate	
— Phase I Trails: Folger Loop		
— Proposed New Segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail (Hiking, Equestrian, Bicycling)		

While the District strives to use the best available digital data, this data does not represent a legal survey and is merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.

Path: G:\Projects\La_Honda_Creek_Master_Plan\Implementation\PublicAccess\Trails\Figure 1_LHP_PublicAccessTrailsPhase1_20160412.mxd

Created By: jhawkw