




Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: June 22, 2016

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager 

FROM: Sheryl Schaffner, General Counsel
Michael Williams, Real Property Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Partnership and Conservation Easement with Amah Mutsun Land Trust at Mount Umunhum, Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the Board of Directors (Board) about the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's initial discussions with Amuh Mutsun Land Trust to protect the Native American cultural resources, associated natural resources and provide related educational services at the Mount Umunhum summit property at Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve by entering into a proposed Conservation Easement with the Trust.

DISCUSSION

Overview

As part of a long-standing collaborative effort with local tribal representatives to identify, interpret, conserve, enhance, and educate ourselves and the public about the long and rich Native American historical and present cultural resources at Mount Umunhum, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is considering entering into a Conservation Easement with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (Trust) over the 38.67-acre Mount Umunhum summit property.

As has been discussed previously with the Board and the public at large, from the beginning of our involvement with Mount Umunhum, the military history there has been well understood and extensively developed and discussed for historical purposes. Over time, through our outreach efforts and as part of the environmental review process, we have also come to understand that this is the most sacred site to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

Before this was Silicon Valley, and before it was the Valley of Heart's Delight, this valley was home to one of the greatest population concentrations of Native Americans in North America. It was a thriving economic center that promoted biodiversity and healthy relationships with the land for thousands of years. The economic success and vitality of our region today has its roots in that era. The mountain's name comes from the Ohlone word for Hummingbird, the central figure of the Amah Mutsun creation story, who delivered fire from that very summit, hundreds of

generations ago. The mountain continues to be a sacred site for many: and a matter of great cultural value and importance to all of us.

The District and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band (Tribe) have a history of collaboratively working to identify, interpret and conserve these important cultural resources, and the proposed Conservation Easement is intended to further that effort. The concept is to ensure that the Tribe is actively invested in those efforts in perpetuity, assisting us in continuing to identify, interpret, conserve, and educate the District and general public in the cultural resources on Mount Umunhum, to recruit the Tribe's expertise and assistance in continuing our efforts to restore the mountain from the impacts of the military utilization, and to allow the Tribe to take an active role in bringing Native American history and cultural knowledge into the present for the good of both the local tribes and the population at large.

Outlined below are the general goals and terms of the proposed Conservation Easement discussed with Amah Mutsun Land Trust (Trust).

Conservation Easement

The purpose of the Conservation Easement for the 38.67-acre Mount Umunhum summit property would be to preserve, enhance and restore Native American cultural resources, associated natural resources and related educational services. Discussions with the Trust include providing native plant restoration and cultivation of a native education garden, indigenous and cultural interpretation for the public and an area for ceremonial dance.

The District would retain all rights for open space and public access management and development of trails, staging areas, shelters, viewing platforms, interpretive features and employee residence on the summit property. In addition, the District would maintain and repair the Radar Tower.

NEXT STEPS

Once discussions and negotiations with the Trust are completed, the Conservation Easement will be presented for consideration by the District's Board of Directors at a future meeting.