



DATE: March 8, 2017

MEMO TO: MROSD Board of Directors

FROM: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager

SUBJECT: Update on La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Implementation Actions

This FYI Memorandum provides updates on the implementation of the La Honda Creek Master Plan Phase I actions as of April 15, 2016, the date of the prior Board FYI (Attachment 1). Phase I actions are scheduled to begin between Years 1 to 5 (2012 – 2017). Some actions will be completed within this timeframe (e.g. Phase I trail and new parking area), other longer-term projects will continue into Phase II (e.g. Red Barn Site Plan and Phase II trails):

Table 1. Phase I Actions (Years 1-5)

High Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Designate Conservation Management Units	Completed	N/A
Pond Management Plan	Completed	N/A
Water infrastructure improvements and conservation grazing in central/northern portion of the Preserve	Underway	Infrastructure improvements for the remaining Pasture #3 in the former McDonald Ranch area are included in the proposed FY17-18 Action Plan.
Amend Williamson Act Contracts on affected Preserve properties to permit open space and recreational uses compatible with agriculture	Completed; San Mateo County determined that the District does not need to pursue amendments to Williamson Act contracts so long as properties remain in active agricultural use.	N/A
Reduce cattle impacts to water quality	Completed; installed fencing to exclude cattle from Harrington and La Honda Creeks in impacted areas.	Continue monitoring and implement additional measures as needed.
Red Barn Area Site Plan	Underway; initiated in FY15-16. Completed preliminary site assessments, opportunities and constraints analysis, and preliminary conceptual design. Draft conceptual design alternatives under preparation for PNR and Board input and public presentation.	Q4 FY16-17: Present Conceptual Design Alternatives to PNR Committee and public. Seek Board acceptance of Preferred Design Alternative to initiate CEQA review.

Emergency maintenance repairs to the White Barn and Redwood Cabin	Completed initial evaluation of Redwood Cabin maintenance repairs and presented to PNR Committee; further work deferred due to other priority actions.	Repairs to White Barn deferred to FY18-19 to first complete the structural assessment in FY17-18 (see below).
Two new interim parking areas: one off Sears Ranch Road and the other across from the Driscoll Event Center	Underway; the scope for the parking area was modified with Board approval from a small, interim lot, to a larger, paved permanent lot. Permitting now underway. In addition, a temporary equestrian permit parking area is in place at the Event Center; site was moved to the Event Center with purchase of the property.	Awaiting permits from County of San Mateo to proceed with bidding of the Sears Ranch Road Parking Area. Construction scheduled to begin in early Fall 2017.
Phase I road and trail erosion treatments	Completed; final improvements to Sears Ranch access road completed in November 2016.	N/A
Phase I trail improvements: open main Driscoll Ranch road	Underway; completed public access consultation with San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Board, as well as design and fabrication of interpretive signage (conservation grazing).	Installation of self-closing gates, fencing, signage and replacement of Harrington Creek Bridge superstructure to be completed by fall 2017, in time for public opening.
Improve trail off the Allen Road permit parking lot as an easy access trail	Deferred	Deferred to FY18-19.
Replace or repair bridge near Gate LH08	Completed; replaced with pedestrian bridge; no vehicle access.	N/A
Prepare a Wildland Fire Response Plan	Underway; conducted preliminary scoping.	Included in the proposed FY17-18 Action Plan
Contain contaminated areas; complete required remedial actions (complete as of 2011)	Completed	N/A

Moderate Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Springs and water infrastructure inventory	Partially completed; FY16-17 Action Plan includes assessment of and compliance with the San Gregorio Adjudication in La Honda Creek OSP.	Proposed FY2017-18 Action Plan includes implementation of priority compliance actions.
Develop forest management practices	Evaluation initiated and potential site identified for a pilot reforestation project.	Proposed FY17-18 Action Plan includes site evaluation and development of Forest Restoration Plan under project title: Restoration Forestry Demonstration Project.
Complete historical and structural assessments of the White Barn and Redwood Cabin	Partially Completed (Redwood Cabin assessment done)	Proposed FY17-18 Action Plan includes White Barn assessments.
Non-renew Williamson Act contracts	Completed	N/A
Make updates to the open space dedication status of Preserve parcels	Completed; updates made annually; no changes recommended in 2016.	Review as part of annual dedication report.
Low Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Cleanup existing debris sites	Completed in January 2017; removed 14 dilapidated buildings, cleaned up and restored site.	N/A
Identify former logging features and incorporate as part of the trail experience	Deferred	Deferred for FY18-19.

To date, the District has completed 50% (7 of 14) of the high priority Phase I priorities, 40% (6 of 14) of the moderate priorities, and 50% (1 of 2) of the low priorities. In addition, the District has initiated all five (5) Phase II priorities and completed two of the five priorities.

In an effort to streamline the permitting process with the County of San Mateo, District staff requested a permit consultation meeting and pre-submittal site visit in June 2016 with County Planning, Public Works and Parks Departments to discuss the proposed Sears Ranch Road parking area and answer preliminary questions from the County. The project is benefitting from the early consultation and streamlined review, where a permit may be issued in less than six months.

Table 2. Summary of Phase I Priority Action Implementation

Phase I Priority Actions (Years 1 – 5)	April 15, 2016 FYI	March 8, 2017 FYI
High Priority (14 actions)	6 completed 6 underway/partially completed 2 deferred	7 completed 6 underway/partially completed 1 deferred
Moderate Priority (5 actions)	1 completed 2 underway/partially completed 2 deferred	2 completed 2 underway/partially completed 1 proposed for FY17-18 Action Plan
Low Priority (2 actions)	1 underway 1 deferred	1 completed 1 deferred
Total 21 Priorities		

The following Phase II Priorities, which were originally scheduled for initiation in Years 6-10 (2018 – 2022), have also begun or have been completed ahead of schedule:

Table 3: Phase II Priorities Underway or Completed

High Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Watershed and in-stream salmonid habitat restoration	Completed in-stream habitat restoration for steelhead and Coho salmon within main stem of San Gregorio Creek at former Apple Orchard parcel in FY 2016-17.	Proposed FY17-18 Action Plan includes in-stream habitat restoration for steelhead and Coho salmon within main stem of San Gregorio Creek.
Red Barn parking area	Conceptual site plan preparations underway	Identify Preferred Alternative for Site Plan; initiate and complete environmental review for CEQA compliance
Implement Phase II road and trail erosion treatments	Initial project scoping and alignment scouting is underway of select Phase II trails as part of Red Barn Site Plan.	Continue scoping and scouting of select Phase II trail projects in FY17-18.
Moderate Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Construct the permanent Sears Ranch Road parking area	Permits under review.	Construction scheduled for fall of 2017.
Remove dilapidated structures	Completed	N/A

Overall Schedule and Key Milestones for Phases I and II

The overall schedule for Phases I and II of the La Honda Creek Master Plan with key milestones is shown in Attachment 2. Milestones are organized under the various components: (a) Public Access Infrastructure, (b) Land & Facilities, and (c) Resource Management and Restoration. In this diagram, the Master Plan implementation schedule starts with the acquisition of the former

Driscoll Ranch acquisition and ends with the 2020 targeted date for opening the Red Barn Parking Area.

The District is targeting late 2017 to open the southern area of the preserve to the public.

Other Next Steps for the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

Staff will be presenting trail names for the lower La Honda Creek area (former Driscoll Ranch area) to the Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee and the Board in late Summer 2017. In addition, staff will present a Master Plan amendment to formalize a new loop trail in the western region of lower La Honda Creek.

Prepared by: Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Manager
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager
Jay Lin, P.E., Engineering & Construction Manager
Brian Malone, Land & Facilities Services Manager

Attachments:

1. April 15, 2016 FYI Memorandum
2. March 8, 2017 LHC Process/Milestones/Schedule Diagram



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: April 15, 2016

MEMO TO: Action Plan and Budget Committee

THROUGH: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager *SEA*

FROM: Ana Ruiz, AICP, Assistant General Manager
Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan Phase I Priority Actions

At the April 12, 2016 Action Plan and Budget Committee (Committee) meeting, the Committee requested additional information to understand what priority actions have been and have not been implemented for the opening of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (LHC). The Committee sought to understand how the opening of Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (BCR) has impacted the timeline for the opening of LHC and what potential tradeoffs should be considered between these two major projects as well as other public access projects prior to recommending the proposed Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Action Plan and Budget to the full Board.

This FYI memorandum provides the Committee with an overview of the 2012 La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan Phase I priority actions that have been implemented or are underway, and informs the Committee of any such actions that have been deferred to a later phase and/or remain to be implemented. As a reminder, the Phase I priority actions were scheduled to be completed within approximately the first five years of Master Plan Implementation, following the Board approval date of August 2012. The Phase I, 5-year implementation timeframe is therefore assumed to have been set from September 2012 to August 2017.

To prioritize the opening of LHC in a timely manner, the Committee seeks to evaluate the schedules for the Phase I public access improvements and the trade-offs made to date for the two priority Preserves -- LHC and BCR -- given the significant resources that have been required to address the multiple complexities associated with BCR.

BACKGROUND

At the November 17, 2015 Special Meeting, the Board requested that staff evaluate the resources and priority actions that would be necessary to complete public access improvements and open LHC without further delays caused by shifting resources to BCR. The Board's preference was to not delay the opening of LHC, yet concurrently continue to work towards completing the BCR Preserve Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Staff re-evaluated the timing of the subsequent phased implementation for opening BCR, once the Preserve Plan and EIR have been completed, and, per Board direction, focused on slowing down implementation projects in order to free up resources to work on LHC public access projects. A FYI Memorandum summarizing

the results of the October and November 2015 Board Retreats, including Board direction as discussed above, was forwarded to the Board on February 10, 2016 (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION

In August of 2012, the Board adopted the LHC Master Plan and Mitigated Negative Declaration (R-12-83), which provides stewardship and public access prescriptions for the entire Preserve over a thirty-year period. At the time of approval, implementation of the Master Plan was intended to occur incrementally over 30 years, where the Master Plan Phasing Plan provides a general guideline for implementation with Master Plan actions grouped into five phases. Phase I actions are intended to be implemented in years 1-5 following Master Plan approval, where the targeted opening date of the Preserve would be fall of 2017. Actions were categorized by High Priority, Moderate Priority, and Low Priority. A FYI Memorandum regarding the status of several ongoing LHC Public Access Projects that are part of Phase I of the Master Plan was forwarded to the Board on February 10, 2016 (Attachment 2).

Table 1 provides the implementation status of the High Priority, Moderate Priority, and Low Priority Phase I Master Plan Action Items (i.e. action items scheduled for the first five years of implementation). Of the 14 High Priority Actions in Phase I, the District has completed six, another six are underway, and two are deferred. Of the Moderate Priority Actions, one action of five has been completed and two are partially completed, and two are deferred. Of the Low Priority Actions, one of the two actions is underway, with the second deferred.

Table 1. Status of La Honda Creek Preserve Master Plan Phase I Priority Actions

High Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Designate Conservation Management Units	Completed	
Prepare a Pond Management Plan	Completed	
Implement water infrastructure improvements and conservation grazing in central/northern portion of the Preserve	Underway	The proposed FY16-17 Action Plan includes completion of infrastructure improvements for the remaining Pasture #3 in the former McDonald Ranch area.
Amend Williamson Act Contracts on affected Preserve properties to permit open space and recreational uses compatible with agriculture	Underway	San Mateo County determined that the District does not need to pursue Amendments to the Williamson Act contracts for the former Wool and McDonald Ranches, providing that the District remains in compliance by maintaining active agriculture on these properties. The long term grazing leases with AgCo Hay on the Driscoll Ranch and the Markegards on the former McDonald Ranch

		satisfy the continued agricultural use requirements.
Identify and implement measures to reduce cattle impacts to water quality	Underway	
Prepare the Red Barn Area Site Plan	Underway	Project initiated in FY15-16 to begin site design and is proposed to continue in FY16-17 to complete design/engineering plans, any additional CEQA review, and permitting for the proposed new facilities.
Complete emergency maintenance repairs to the White Barn and Redwood Cabin	Initiated evaluation of Redwood Cabin maintenance repairs and presented to PNR Committee; further work deferred due to other priority actions.	Future work beyond FY16-17 would include (1) the preparation of updated Redwood Cabin repair cost estimates and a recommendation on how to proceed for review by PNR and subsequent Board approval and (2) an evaluation of repairs needed for the White Barn.
Establish two interim parking areas: one off Sears Ranch Road and the other across from the Driscoll Event Center	Underway; to be completed by 2017	Design of interim Sears Ranch parking lot underway; temporary equestrian permit parking at Event Center included as part of Preliminary Use and Management Plan. FY16-17 Action Plan includes construction of the interim parking lot.
Implement Phase I road and trail erosion treatments	Underway; to be completed by 2017	FY16-17 Action Plan includes final road improvements to the main Sears Ranch access road to be initiated summer 2016.
Implement Phase I trail improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Main Driscoll Ranch Road 	Underway; to be completed by 2017	See schedule above – erosion treatments needed prior to opening the main ranch road.
Improve trail off the Allen Road permit parking lot as an easy access trail	Deferred	
Replace or repair bridge near Gate LH08	Completed (replaced with pedestrian bridge; no vehicle access)	
Prepare a Wildland Fire Response Plan	Deferred	Visitor Services to initiate in FY2016-17 as part of Core Functions

Contain contaminated areas; complete required remedial actions (complete as of 2011)	Completed	
Moderate Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Complete a springs and water infrastructure inventory	Partially completed	FY16-17 Action Plan includes inventory and assessment by Water Resources Specialist
Develop forest management practices	Evaluation initiated and potential site identified for pilot forest restoration project (to be confirmed by registered professional forester).	FY16-17 Action Plan includes Restoration Forestry Demonstration Project (would be implemented in conjunction with Wildland Fire Response Plan).
Complete historical and structural assessments of the White Barn and Redwood Cabin	Partially Completed (Redwood Cabin assessment done); White Barn assessment deferred.	
Non-renew Williamson Act contracts	Completed	
Make updates to the open space dedication status of Preserve parcels	Deferred	
Low Priority Actions	Status	Next Steps
Cleanup existing debris sites	Underway; to be completed by 2017	FY16-17 Action Plan includes demolition and cleanup
Identify former logging features and incorporate as part of the trail experience	Deferred	

Additional Phase I Actions Implemented at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

To facilitate grazing operations, public access improvements, and the opening of LHC, the District implemented additional land conservation, property management, and stewardship actions in FY2013-14, FY2014-15, and FY2015-16 that were not identified in the 2012 Master Plan. These projects were largely related to new purchases that followed Board approval of the 2012 Master Plan. In addition, approximately \$94,000 in grant resources above the District's local funding match is being applied in LHC for fisheries enhancement at the Apple Orchard site. Also, approximately \$100,000 related to the District's grazing program at Driscoll Ranch and McDonald Ranch is being applied through grazing leases (e.g. fencing and water system improvements).

Land Conservation/Property Management Actions

- Acquisition of the Apple Orchard and Event Center properties as additions to the Preserve (2015)
- Development of a Facilities Use Agreement for the Event Center to allow for limited equestrian activities (Interim 2014, Final 2015)
- Acquisition of the Cunha Trust Property as an addition to the Preserve, serving to consolidate access rights along the private extension of Sears Ranch Road (2016)

- Completion of Quit Claim negotiations with Caltrans for the tunnel under Hwy 84 that connects the Event Center to the rest of La Honda OSP (2016)

Stewardship Actions

- La Honda Creek Endangered Wildlife Protection and Habitat Restoration
- Driscoll/McDonald Water Systems Hydrologic Analysis
- Grazing Infrastructure
 - Driscoll Water Systems
 - McDonald Fencing
- Driscoll Main Water Line Maintenance
- Invasive weed treatment (2013-2015)
- Installation of wildlife-friendly fencing along Harrington Creek (2013)
- Event Center Land Stewardship Projects (2013-2015):
 - Water system improvements
 - Installation of wildlife-friendly fencing along San Gregorio Creek
 - Grading, resurfacing, and drainage improvements to the roads
- Apple Orchard Land Stewardship Projects (2014-2015):
 - Repairs to grazing infrastructure
 - Ranch road inventory and assessment for erosion reduction
 - Historical Structures Evaluation of the vacant Apple Orchard cabin and barn
 - Grazing Lease for Apple Orchard
- Upper La Honda Demolition of McDonald Ranch (2014)*
- Upper La Honda Demolitions (Paulin House and Houghton Cabin) (2015)*

*Removal of dilapidated structures are Master Plan Phase II actions, where these demolitions were done ahead of the Master Plan schedule.

Resource Loading for LHC Master Plan Phase I Implementation

In order to redirect sufficient resources to complete the Phase I priority actions for opening LHC, the District convened a Project Team with staff assigned from the Planning, Engineering and Construction, Natural Resources, Real Property, Visitor Services, and Land & Facilities Departments as follows:

- Assistant General Manager – Project Sponsor
- Planning Manager – Project Lead
- Planner III – Team Lead; Sears Ranch Interim Parking Lot and Phase I Trails
- Planner II – Red Barn Staging Area and Trails
- Capital Project Manager – demolition of structures in the former Driscoll Ranch area
- Capital Project Manager – repairs to Sears Ranch Road and Parking Lot construction
- Senior Resource Management Specialist – roads and trails inventory work
- Resource Management Specialist III – Endangered Wildlife Management and Restoration
- Senior Real Property Management Specialist – ensuring grazing operations and current lessee uses are not impacted by public access improvements
- Trails Crew – installation of signage and fencing and replacement of Harrington Creek bridge decking

Status of BCR Preserve Plan and EIR

The schedule for the BCR Preserve Plan was slowed down following the November 2015 Board Retreat to shift staff resources back to LHC. Some of the resources that do remain at BCR have been focused on evaluating potential water supply alternatives to inform the development of the Preserve Plan and EIR. Given the shift in resources and the added complexities that have been

uncovered at BCR, the schedule for completing the Preserve Plan and EIR has been extended by approximately six months. At this time, the tentative date for presenting the Preserve Plan and EIR for Board approval is Fall 2016 (Q2 FY2016-17).

In addition to slowing down the timeline for completion of the Preserve Plan, design development of the Phase I parking lot at the Upper Pond area near the former Alma College has been delayed four months as part of the shift in staff resources back to LHC. Moreover, implementation actions for the Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan have been deferred for a future year beyond FY16-17.

Conclusion

Upon review of the distribution of FY2014-15 and FY2015-16 Action Plan Projects for LHC and BCR, a greater number of projects have been implemented to date at LHC as compared to BCR to prepare the Preserve for public use. The distribution of projects emphasizes the District’s focus on the implementation of priority actions to open LHC by fall of 2017, which is consistent with the Phase I (1-5 years) timeline in the approved Master Plan. (See Attachments 3 and 4)

The proposed FY2016-17 Action Plan Key Projects for LHC and BCR are shown in Attachment 5. The distribution of projects is similar for both Preserves (10-11 Key Projects), in order to open LHC by 2017 and BCR in a phased timeline.

NEXT STEPS

A schedule of key milestones for the LHC Public Access Projects is provided below. A conservative schedule is provided for the Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking Area, which allows time for potential permitting delays. Additional projects, including demolition and clean-up of dilapidated structures, and operational improvements, including the installation of gates, signs, and fencing, will proceed concurrently and are not shown below for simplicity.

Table 2. Tentative Schedule for LHC

LHC Milestones	Sears Ranch Road Interim Parking and Interim Trails	Red Barn Parking and Trails
Design/Engineering Consultant Selection	February 2016	June 2016
Initiate Public and Stakeholder Outreach/Agency Consultation	March 2016	October 2016
Tentative Board approval of Design/Initiate CEQA	Completed – as part of the Master Plan Mitigated Negative Declaration	June 2017 (potential Subsequent IS/MND)
Submit Planning/Regulatory Permit Applications	July 2016	January 2018
Initiate Construction Documentation	October 2016	June 2018
Submit Permit Applications*	NA	January 2019
Initiate Construction Bidding Process	January 2017	January 2020
Construction	Summer 2017	Summer 2020
In Service	Fall 2017	Fall 2020

*If required

Per the Board’s direction, staff is focused on a key milestone for BCR, which is the completion of the Preserve Plan and EIR for Board approval, in accordance with the revised timeline (see

Table 3). In addition, the overall timeline and project phasing for BCR implementation actions will be reviewed by the Board during the Annual Action Plan and Budget cycle.

Table 3. Tentative Schedule for BCR

Presentation of the Phased Improvement Plans and/or Minimal Site Design Alternatives for Bear Creek Stables	May 2016
BCR Preserve Plan EIR Hearing and Alma College Presentation	Summer 2016
EIR Certification and Preserve Plan Approval (including Stables and Alma College Site Plans)	Fall 2016
Implementation of Phase I Parking Lot, Pedestrian Crossing on Bear Creek Road and Trails on west-side of Preserve (pending Board approval)	Late 2016/2017

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: February 10, 2016 FYI Memorandum, RE: Board Retreat Debrief

Attachment 2: February 10, 2016 FYI Memorandum, RE: La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Public Access Projects

Attachment 3: Board Approved FY2014-15 Action Plan Projects for LHC and BCR

Attachment 4: Board Approved FY2015-16 Action Plan Projects for LHC and BCR

Attachment 5: Proposed FY2016-17 Action Plan Key Projects for LHC and BCR

LA HONDA CREEK MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

