



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-21-100  
Meeting 21-21  
July 28, 2021

## SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA ITEM 1

### AGENDA ITEM

Santa Cruz Mountains Redwood Forest Conservation Management

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Receive a presentation from conservation partner organizations on redwood forest management.  
No Board action required.

### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) owns approximately 30,000 acres of forest and woodland habitat. District efforts to manage forests for wildland fire resiliency, ecosystem services, carbon sequestration, and climate resiliency have become more urgent in recent years, due to the growing frequency of droughts and the increasing risk of wildfires. Both the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program and the draft La Honda Forest Management Plan represent major efforts to improve forest conditions. The District is one of many organizations in the region that manage forests for conservation purposes. Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens Fund, California State Parks, and the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) will be presenting on local projects managing redwood forests to provide context and share best practices for managing local forests.

### DISCUSSION

The Santa Cruz Mountains bioregion includes a diverse assemblage of forest habitats, but only approximately 50 stands old growth redwood forests still exist covering an estimated 10,400 acres, much of which are in Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The remaining forests are all second-growth forests, having been cut originally from 1850 to 1950 and then subsequently logged anywhere from one to five times. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fire suppression, fuels accumulation, rural development, Sudden Oak Death, and a changing climate have further altered forest stand conditions. Commercial timber harvest in the region has generally decreased over the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, with select significant stands managed locally for sustainable timber production. The remaining redwood forests are managed by parks and conservation organizations, as well as by rural residents. Most recently, catastrophic wildfires have affected large areas of these redwood forests. How to best manage these forests with a restoration perspective as climatic conditions continue to change is an evolving area of practice and research. Local practitioners have been invited to share their redwood forest management stories, case studies, policies, and lessons learned. As the District expands its forest management activities, notably through the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program and the draft La Honda Forest Management Plan, engaging in a dialogue with forest managers who have conducted similar

activities with a similar land stewardship ethic provides a good foundation for considering the complex topic of active forest management.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The presentation on redwood forest management from conservation partner organizations has no fiscal impact.

**BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

This item has not been reviewed by a Board Committee.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE**

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

**NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to engage in a dialogue with local forest managers as projects are developed and share lessons learned.

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