




Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

To: Board of Directors

From: Stephen E. Abbors 

Date: September 25, 2013

Re: Written Communications

PESCADERO MUNICIPAL ADVISOR COUNCIL

Board of Directors
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

Dear Directors,

The Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council formerly requests total support of the board of Midpen to continue to permit and support operation of the Driscoll Ranch Events Center in the LaHonda/San Gregorio/Pescadero communities. This facility is a major contributor to the local South Coast economy and the general welfare of San Mateo County residents. The events staged and hosted here are a major draw to tourism and visitors on an International level and should continue to operate.

The Driscoll Ranch Events Center has sponsored and benefited the following worthy and wonderful causes for the **past 11 years:**

ALS Benefit Christy Law

Ranch Day for La Honda /Pescadero School (introduction to / farm animals)

Ranch Day Jean Weinguard School for the Deaf (introduction to Agriculture /farm animals)

La Honda Fire Dept. (proceeds from Rodeo to purchase new fire truck Engine #357)

Mounted Search and Rescue (training exercise last 7yrs)

L.G.B.T Annual Rode (proceeds to La Honda Fire Dept.)

Annual Jugglers Race Team Picnic

Mounted Patrol G.P.S. of trail system

San Mateo Horsemen Association

San Francisco Horsemen Association

Bay Area Savvy Player Horse Clinic

Coast side Team Ropers Club (Tuesday/Thursday Roping Event)

Annual Audubon Bird Count (past 10 years)

First Coast side Ranch for Mid Pen to introduce cattle as a resource management tool

RFD TV show with Clinton Anderson for horse sensory training

Local cattle shipping and receiving area

P.O. Box 249, Pescadero, CA 94060

If the concern is the cost involved in the continued operation of the center it would appear that this may be addressed by passing along the respective costs to each event staged therein.

Respectively submitted,

Rob Skinner

Corresponding Secretary,

Pescadero Mutual Advisory Council

CC: HMB Review, HMB Chamber of Commerce, San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau, San Mateo Times, Palo Alto Times, SF Chronicle.

September 20, 2013

Rob Skinner, Corresponding Secretary
Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council
P.O. Box 249
Pescadero, CA 94060

RE: Driscoll Ranch Event Center

Dear Mr. Skinner and Councilmembers:

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments regarding the future use and management of the Driscoll Ranch Event Center (Event Center). We have added you to our notification mailing list for this item to ensure that you receive notices of upcoming meetings.

To begin, we would like to clarify that the Event Center property and associated ranch equipment are not owned by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District), nor do we have any management control or responsibility for this property at this time. We are, however, currently considering the possibility of entering into a Lease and Management Agreement with the current landowner, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), who recently acquired the property from a private landowner.

Ahead of making a decision on whether to enter into a lease and management agreement for the property, the District's Board of Directors (Board) asked staff to gather information about pre-existing uses that have occurred at the Event Center to learn more about its past uses and its role on the San Mateo Coast. Additionally, the Board requested information on what uses may be considered compatible with the District's mission and fit given known constraints about current staff and management capacity. The data gathered was presented to the Board at a workshop on September 10 held at Elkus Ranch on the coast.

Careful consideration was given to each pre-existing use that has occurred at the Event Center, and although many of the uses are of much higher intensity than what is allowed on District Preserves, staff proposed three Use Alternatives as part of the workshop. These Use Alternatives (refer to Table 1) range in level of intensity, and therefore also range in the level of required oversight and management from District administrative, patrol, and maintenance staff. Under each Use Alternative, livestock staging and processing to facilitate a conservation grazing operation on La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve would continue as well as using the site as an emergency staging area.

Over thirty (30) members of the public attended the September workshop and offered comments on the benefits of the Event Center including its role in supporting local tourism, maintaining the rural character of the coast, and providing a valuable community resource. After reviewing the Use Alternatives and hearing from the public, the Board commented on the proposed Use Alternatives but made no decision at the workshop.

Table 1: Use Alternatives Under Evaluation

Potential Uses	Alternative 1: <i>Compatible Uses</i>	Alternative 2: <i>Compatible and Moderate Intensity Special Uses</i>	Alternative 3: <i>Compatible and High Intensity Special Uses</i>	Comments
Staging for Group and Organized Trail Rides	√	√	√	The District has issued permits and accommodated trail rides on the Preserve in the past; permitted group rides are typical uses that are allowed at District Preserves and are already included in the District's current use permit system.
Agricultural and Environmental Education	√	√	√	Education programs are consistent with the District's Mission and Basic Policy.
Horse Training and Clinics		√	√	Unique for the District as these recreational uses are not provided elsewhere on District Preserves. Uses would be considered on a case-by-case basis and should not preclude opportunities for general public recreation.
LGBT Rodeo			√	A rodeo is a very high intensive use involving organized equine and livestock events, competition, and spectator attendance. This use is not consistent with the District's Basic Policy of low intensity public recreational use. Under this alternative, rodeo use would be limited to the LGBT Rodeo and its permit would be evaluated on a year-to-year basis prior to considering reissuance. LGBT is the only known recent sponsor of a rodeo who has held one annually for several years (next one coming up on September 22). The Driscoll Ranch Rodeo has not been held for the past two years since 2011.

Based on the input received at the September 10 Board workshop, staff will further refine these Use Alternatives and present a recommendation to the full Board at a future meeting later this fall when the Board would consider and decide (1) whether to enter into a Lease and Management Agreement with POST to manage the property, and if so, (2) what uses to allow at the Event Center prior to undergoing a more extensive use and management planning process. Any uses allowed on the property would be included as part of a Preliminary Use and Management Plan for the Event Center.

I hope the Council will attend the upcoming Board meeting to offer further comment on this coastal resource. Thank you again for your input. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz at (650) 691-1200 or aruiz@openspace.org.

Sincerely,

Jed Cyr
Board President