

Existing Conditions / Opportunities and Constraints Report
Hawthorns Area Plan
March 2023

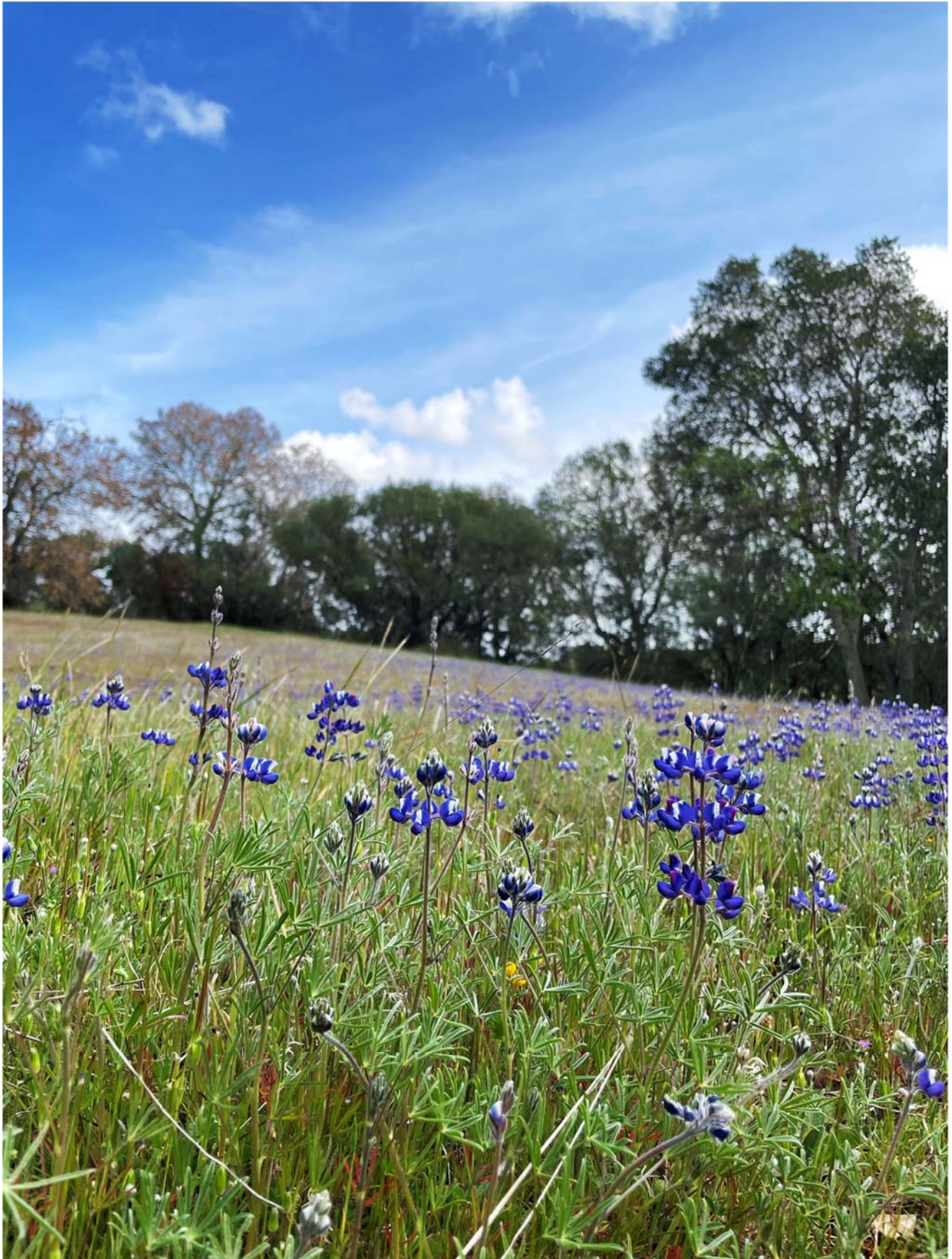


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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 79-acre Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (Hawthorns Area) is located near the intersection of Alpine Road and Portola Road and is one of the last remaining islands of open space in the Town of Portola Valley (Town). The property (APNs: 790-800-80, 790-800-50, and 790-800-90) is bounded by Alpine Road to the west, Los Trancos Road to the east, and private property to the north and south. The property is accessible from driveways on Alpine Road and Los Trancos Road.

Existing improvements to the Hawthorns Area include residential buildings, farm structures, landscaping, and ranch roads. Some of these structures date back to the late 1800s, when a prominent San Francisco resident, Judge James Monroe Allen, acquired the property and constructed a residence, carriage house, and several ancillary buildings near Los Trancos Creek. Frances Newhall Woods purchased the estate in 1916 from Judge Allen's widow, Ida Davis Allen, and made additional improvements to the property. The cluster of buildings and structures near Los Trancos Creek is informally referred to as the Historic Complex.

In 2006, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors (Board) accepted the Hawthorns property and an endowment fund from the Woods Family Trust as the largest private land gift received by the District at that time. The Woods Family Trust generously donated their property to preserve it as public open space in perpetuity. The property officially transferred to the District in 2011 as the Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. This transfer included an endowment to be used towards stewardship of the donated property and a conservation easement managed by the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to permanently protect the natural features of the property and restrict future development of new structures or infrastructure.

1.1 REPORT PURPOSE

To fulfill the goals set forth by the 2014 [Measure AA Open Space Bond](#) and Open Space [Vision Plan](#) priorities approved by the District Board of Directors, the District will prepare an Area Plan for the Hawthorns Area to guide resource and land management activities and outline the introduction of ecologically sensitive public access on the property.

Development of the Area Plan will require careful attention to the preliminary use and management plan and related plan amendments for the property, existing conditions, and the inherent opportunities and constraints of the site. Based on technical studies, available background material, and public engagement, this Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Report summarizes the environmental characteristics, site conditions, operations and maintenance activities, allowed and permitted uses, and site restoration projects undertaken since the District officially acquired the property in 2011. This report will also help identify opportunities and constraints at the Hawthorns Area, particularly as they pertain to future resource management and public access.

This document is organized into the following sections:

- **Section 1.0, Introduction**
- **Section 2.0, Background** provides an overview of the Hawthorns Area Property and a description of the District's planning framework.
- **Section 3.0, Existing Conditions** establishes the current conditions at the Hawthorns Area, organized into the following topics:
 - Natural Resources
 - Public Access
 - Local and Regional Connectivity
 - Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Aesthetics
 - Operations and Maintenance
- **Section 4.0, Opportunities and Constraints** describes the key considerations for future resource management and public access at the property.
- **Section 5.0, Public and Stakeholder Engagement** includes an overview of the public engagement effort conducted during the Existing Conditions Phase of the Hawthorns Area Plan process.
- **Section 6.0, Supplemental Figures** encompasses maps and images that provide additional context on the Hawthorns Area.
- **Section 7.0, Appendix** comprises supplemental reference materials.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 DISTRICT OVERVIEW

The District is a public agency formed by voter initiative in 1972. The District's purpose is to acquire and permanently protect a regional greenbelt of open space lands, preserve and restore wildlife habitat, watersheds, viewsheds, and fragile ecosystems, and provide opportunities for low-intensity recreation and environmental education. On the San Mateo County coast, the District has an expanded mission to acquire and preserve agricultural land of regional significance, preserve rural character and encourage viable agricultural uses of land resources. The District has protected more than 70,000 acres of land and currently manages 26 open space

preserves with more than 250 miles of low-intensity recreational trails, including segments of four regional trails. Representing a wide spectrum of habitat communities, including bayside tidal wetlands, grasslands, oak woodlands, riparian corridors, coyote brush scrubland, and evergreen forests, District lands extend from San Carlos in San Mateo County in the north to the unincorporated

Mission Statement: *“To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space in perpetuity; protect and restore the natural environment; and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.”*

Santa Clara County area located south of Los Gatos in the south. The District's mission statement outlines the critical functions of the agency and serves as the policy framework with which all District goals, objectives, and implementation actions must remain consistent.

2.2 VISION PLAN AND MEASURE AA

In 2014, the Board approved 54 priority actions in the Open Space Vision Plan that prioritized conservation, management, and public access efforts throughout the District's jurisdiction; the Hawthorns Area is included under Vision Plan Priority #6: Windy Hill, which states the following actions that are specific to the Hawthorns Area:

“Open Hawthorns Area, develop trails connecting to Portola Valley and Palo Alto trails. Explore partnerships to protect, restore, and interpret historic buildings. Improve habitat conditions in Los Trancos Creek.”

The public supported this Vision Plan priority in 2014 when they voted for the passage of Measure AA, a \$300M general obligation bond to fund the top 25 Vision Plan priority actions. The total expenditure plan for the Windy Hill Measure AA Portfolio is \$12,740,000. The Hawthorns Area Plan would fulfill relevant portions of Vision Plan Priority #6 approved by the Board and supported by the public.

2.3 HAWTHORNS AREA VISION AND GOALS

On March 23, 2022, the District Board of Directors adopted the Vision and Goals for the Hawthorns Area after a robust public input process. The *vision* describes how the Hawthorns Area should look and function into the future, while the *goals* define allowable uses and management strategies. Together, the vision and goals represent a comprehensive use and management roadmap for the Hawthorns Area.

2.3.1 Hawthorns Area Vision Statement

The Hawthorns Area offers picturesque views of rolling oak grasslands, the San Francisco Bay, and the Santa Cruz Mountains; provides important wildlife refuge; and reflects the region's natural, agricultural, and social history. The District will protect and manage natural, scenic, cultural, and open space resources at the Hawthorns Area and provide ecologically sensitive public access consistent with the District's mission and the allowable uses outlined in the property's conservation easement.

2.3.2 Hawthorns Area Goals

1. Protect and restore native habitat and manage for ecological resiliency of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, wildlife connectivity, and other natural resources.
2. Open the Hawthorns Area to low-intensity public access, provide an internal trail system, and provide multimodal access to the property.
3. Connect to adjacent public trails and explore opportunities for trail connections to regional open space lands.
4. Interpret the rich natural, cultural, and historic features and pursue partnerships to manage the property's natural and cultural history.
5. Highlight scenic viewpoints and design recreational amenities while protecting scenic viewsheds.
6. Manage the property for safe public access in a fiscally sustainable manner that promotes ongoing public support and appreciation with ongoing public engagement and consistent with the District's Good Neighbor Policy.

2.4 PRELIMINARY USE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

As part of the acquisition process, the District prepares Preliminary Use and Management Plans (PUMPs) that establish status quo land management activities for properties. The PUMP guides on-site uses and activities until a more comprehensive plan for the property can be developed or an existing plan is amended to incorporate the property. The Board adopted a PUMP for the Hawthorns Area in 2006 and a PUMP amendment in 2012 (**Attachment 1**). Since 2012, District staff have implemented a number of actions prescribed by the PUMP, including the following:

- Secured existing buildings and structures against trespass and vandalism

- Established an on-site employee presence
- Implemented a plan for wildland fire management and defensible space safety
- Conducted grassland restoration and invasive species management
- Evaluated long-term management options for the Historic Complex
- Initiated studying the feasibility of providing public access and connecting to existing trail networks

2.5 CONSERVATION EASEMENT

The Hawthorns Area is subject to a conservation easement granted in 2005 by the Woods Family Trust to POST. The conservation easement allows low-intensity recreational uses and related development that align with improvements typically offered on other District preserves, such as unimproved trails, split rail fences, parking areas, vault restrooms and directional signage. Other forms of development are generally restricted by the conservation easement. Section 6(i) of the conservation easement states the following:

“If the [Hawthorns Area] is ever conveyed to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, or any similar governmental or non-governmental entity intending to use the [Hawthorns Area] for public open space and passive recreational uses, construction of a limited staging area (gravel parking lot, pit toilets, wood rail fencing, trail markers, etc.) around the perimeter of the Improved Portion as necessary to facilitate public access to, and use of, the [Hawthorns Area] for hiking and other uses permitted by this easement.”

Per the conservation easement, the “Improved Portion” refers to the parcel depicted in purple below, while the “Unimproved Portion” of the property is represented by the tan area (see **Figure 1**).

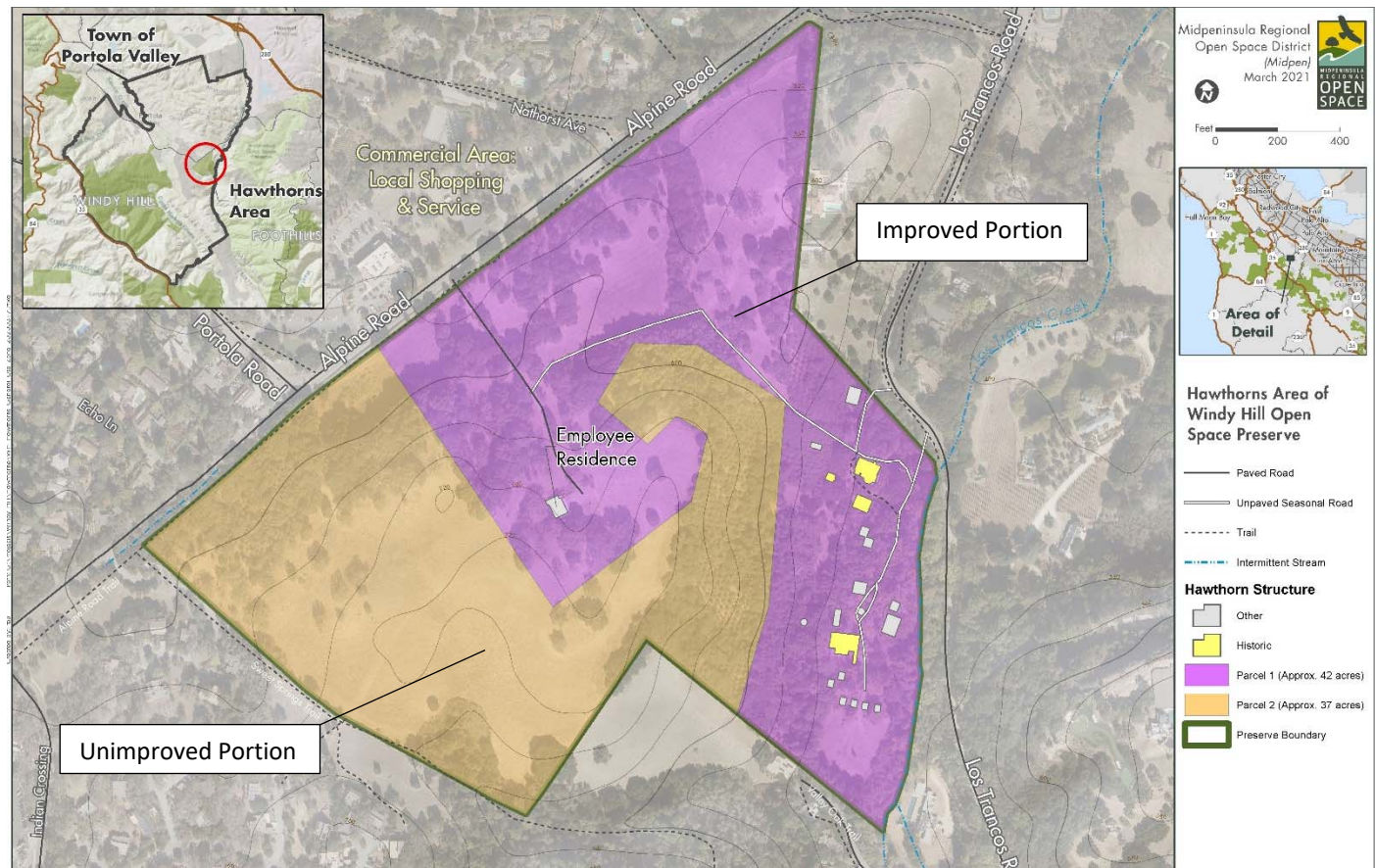


Figure 1: Hawthorns Area Improved and Unimproved Areas per the Conservation Easement (2005)

Other prohibited and permitted uses are described in Section 6 of the conservation easement (**Attachment 2**), as paraphrased in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Hawthorns Area Conservation Easement Prohibited and Permitted Uses

Conservation Easement Section	Description
<i>Prohibited Uses</i>	
3(a)	Subdivision, except for lot line adjustments and transference to a qualified agency for open space uses.
3(b)	Commercial or industrial development or activity, including agricultural use.
3(c)	Construction of additional buildings.
3(d)	Activities that cause significant soil degradation, erosion, or pollution of aquatic features.
3(e)	Tree removal, except as required for safety, fire protection, or resource management.
3(f)	On-site dumping or disposal of waste, refuse or debris.
3(g)	Installation of new utility systems or extension of existing utility system. (The repair, replacement, and relocation of existing utility systems may be allowed.)
3(h)	Exploration, development, or extraction of minerals.
3(i)	Commercial grazing.
3(j)	Use of off-road or all-terrain vehicles, unless used on existing roads, paths, and trails for purposes of site management, public safety, or travel between improvements located on the property.
3(k)	Commercial shooting or commercial shooting ranges are prohibited. Hunting or trapping of wildlife is prohibited, except to prevent damage to existing improvements or as necessary for resource management and public safety purposes.
3(l)	Activities producing sustained noise levels in excess of 65 decibels as measured on trails surrounding the property, except for agricultural and landscaping requirement necessary for the repair, reconstruction, or relocation of existing improvements.
3(m)	Storage or disassembly of inoperable vehicles.
3(n)	Alteration of landforms by grading or excavation.
3(o)	Activities that would degrade the property's scenic and natural character, such as clearing, stripping of native vegetation, grading, or storage of materials.
3(p)	Draining, filling, dredging, clearing, or diking of wetland and riparian areas.
3(q)	Alteration or manipulation of watercourses, or the creation of new water impoundments or watercourses, other than permitted agricultural and ecological enhancements.
3(r)	Placement of signs or billboards, except to display the property's name and use as an open space area, or to control unauthorized use.
3(s)	Golf courses, driving ranges, or sport courts.
3(t)	Excavation, removal, destruction, or sale of archeological artifacts or remains, except as part of an authorized archeological investigation.
<i>Allowable Uses</i>	
6(a)	Reasonable measures for fire safety, erosion control, and tree removal for safety, fire protection, or resource management purposes.
6(b)	Removal of non-native vegetation and restoration with native vegetation.
6(c)	Maintenance and use of existing paved and unpaved roadways, passages, and trails.
6(d)	Exceptions to the prohibited uses established in Section 3 of the Conservation Easement.
6(e)	Use, maintenance, and improvements to the existing spring and ground water system to service the property.

Conservation Easement Section	Description
6(f)	Passive recreational uses such as hiking, bicycling, and equestrian use.
6(g)	Construction of unpaved trails or paths for non-motorized uses.
6(h)	Use, occupancy, repair, reconstruction, or replacement of existing buildings and improvements directly related to the public open space operations of the property owner.
6(i)	Construction of a limited staging area (gravel parking lot, pit toilets, wood rail fencing, trail markers, etc.) to facilitate public access and recreational uses.

3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.1 Plant Communities

Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting conducted a [botanical resource survey](#) at the Hawthorns Area in 2019. **Table** identifies plant communities documented within the Hawthorns Area: Valley and Foothill Grassland, Cismontane Woodland, and Riparian Forest. Aside from these natural habitats, there are stands of woodland that are dominated by introduced species, primarily European olive (*Olea europaea*) and English hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). Aside from woodlands dominated by cultivars, shaded habitats generally feature a high cover of native plants, while more open, sunny habitats support a majority of introduced species.

Plant communities at the Hawthorns Area encompass habitat types that are known to support special-status plants in the region. Based on typical micro-habitat conditions, elevation ranges, and taxa distribution patterns, 11 special status plant species have the potential to occur on the site, of which none were observed during the 2019 protocol-level botanical surveys. The botanical survey identified areas within the Cismontane Woodland as Valley Oak Woodland, a rare and threatened plant community in the state. The botanical surveys also identified a sensitive natural community of woodlands with a cover of California bay trees within the Cismontane Woodland.

Table 2: Hawthorns Area Plant Communities

Name	Acreage	% of Hawthorns Area	Description ¹
Valley and Foothill Grassland	28.5 acres	37%	Introduced, annual Mediterranean grasses and native herbs. On most sites the native species, such as needle grass, have been largely or entirely supplanted by introductions. Stands rich in natives usually found on unusual substrates, such as serpentine or somewhat alkaline soils.
Cismontane Woodland	47 acres	60%	Trees deciduous, evergreen or both, with open canopies. Broadleaved trees dominate, although conifers may be present in or emergent through the canopy. Understories may be open and herbaceous or closed and shrubby. This type occurs on a variety of sites below the conifer forests in Mediterranean California. At the Hawthorns Area, this plant community includes 13.6 acres of olive groves.
Riparian Forest	2.4 acres	3%	Broadleaved, winter deciduous trees, forming closed canopies, associated with low- to mid-elevation perennial and intermittent streams. Most stands even-aged, reflecting the flood-mediated, episodic reproduction. These habitats can be found in every county and climate in California.

Valley and Foothill Grassland

Valley and foothill grasslands at the Hawthorns Area are dominated by a high cover of relatively tall and dense introduced annual grasses. Within central and southwestern portions of the Hawthorns Area, where soils are generally deeper and richer, the most

¹ https://cnps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CNPS_Inventory_4th_ed_OCR.pdf

conspicuous grass was slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*), a highly palatable species that is favored by grazing animals, and so tends to occur in lower covers within grazed habitats. Associated herbaceous species included ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), rose clover (*Trifolium hirtum*), and filaree species (*Erodium spp.*). Grasses occurred as only localized stands along northern portions of the study area, and included the native blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*) and the non-native Harding grass (*Phalaris aquatica*), both of which are perennial species. In addition, there are scattered populations of narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*), a host plant for the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), a candidate species for the Endangered Species List.

Native herbs were generally more common during the summer season, after the annual grasses died back, with species including turkey-mullein (*Croton setigerus*), woodrush tarweed (*Hemizonia congesta ssp. luzulifolia*), and summer lupine (*Lupinus formosus*). Portions of the site that were mowed as part of fire management featured higher covers of these native species, as a result of reduced competition from introduced grasses. Stands of native wildflowers were otherwise noticeably sparse throughout the study area, especially within the largest stands of grassland. However, a few showy stands of annual lupines (e.g., *L. nanus* and *L. bicolor*) were observed along the northern and northwestern portions of the site, where soils appear to be shallower. Localized clusters of the both narrowleaf and smooth mule ears (*Wyethia angustifolia* and *W. glabra*) were conspicuous along the edges of the grasslands, especially on more moist north-facing slopes. As a result of the lack of natural disturbances (e.g., livestock grazing, wildland fire), a stand of coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) was observed encroaching into the grasslands near the northwestern edge of the study area, but was not sufficiently large or homogenous to be mapped as a separate habitat type. Additional areas of such scrub habitats were present as narrow bands along the transitional zones between grassland and woodland habitats.

Cismontane Woodland

The habitat is most prevalent along north- and east-facing slopes as well as areas of concave topography, and consists of two distinct sub-habitat types. Areas within and along the edges of the large grassland in the southwestern portion of the study area are dominated by valley oak trees (*Quercus lobata*). This area amounts to 5.4 out of the total 33.4 acres — the habitat is mapped separately from the Cismontane Woodland because it is rare and threatened.² Valley oaks are the dominant tree, and consist of primarily very large and old trees, with very few signs of regeneration. Associated trees include blue oak as well as a few scattered California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) and Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*). As the trees form more of an open savanna than a woodland, the understory was found to be similar to Valley and Foothill Grassland, with many of the same grass and herb species noted for that habitat. Where trees form more of a closed canopy, additional herbs noted include Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) and tall sock destroyer (*Torilis arvensis*).

Covering 28.0 acres, Cismontane Woodland along steeper slopes (excluding the valley oak sub-habitat) consists primarily of coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and California bay (*Umbellularia californica*) trees. Both species occur as saplings and seedlings as well as mature individuals. Signs of sudden oak death were observed on coast live oaks within the study area. A small stand at the southwestern corner of the site also supports arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), as this location is the headwaters of a small seasonal stream. Some woodlands feature a cover of California bay that would qualify as California Bay Forest, which is a sensitive natural community.³ However, data are still being collected on this habitat type, and more recent data indicate that this is not a particularly rare or threatened type. In fact, as a result of sudden oak death disease, which has resulted in the mortality of millions of coast live oak trees and is spread by California bay (which is not killed by it), the latter is increasing at the expense of the former.

Associated tree species within this habitat include California buckeye, Pacific madrone, and a few scattered Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). The understory was generally sparse, but included toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*). Some of the sunnier openings also supported stands of European olive that have spread beyond planted areas, along with the invasive French broom. The herbaceous understory was similarly sparse, especially in the more shaded zones, but did include at least a low cover of sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza berteroi*), Pacific black snakeroot (*Sanicula crassicaulis*), creeping snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*), rough hedge nettle (*Stachys rigida*), and coastal woodfern (*Dryopteris arguta*).

Woodlands within the study area feature high covers of exotic tree and shrub species. Except for the easternmost area near Los Trancos Creek, the most common species were European olive and English hawthorn. The former were planted as groves along the eastern portion of the property, and the latter were sporadically planted and/or have since colonized other areas. The Historic Complex was planted with a variety of other horticultural species as well. Some of the species, such as horticultural roses (*Rosa sp.*)

² Sensitive plant communities include those designated as such by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as alliances classified in the Manual of California Vegetation (MCV) (Sawyer et al. 2009). Valley Oak Woodland ranked as S3, G3 in the MCV, indicating that the habitat is rare and threatened at both the state and global levels, and are therefore considered sensitive.

³ Sensitive plant communities include those designated as such by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as alliances classified in the Manual of California Vegetation (MCV) (Sawyer et al. 2009). California Bay Forest is a habitat designated as S3, G4 in the MCV, indicating that it is sensitive at the state level.

and camphor tree (*Cinnamomum camphora*), remain as aging individuals that are not reproducing, while others, such as white poplar (*Populus alba*), greater periwinkle (*Vinca major*), annual honesty (*Lunaria annua*), and English hawthorn, continue to spread beyond their original planted locations.

A species that may or may not have been planted by the residents, but which is fairly widespread in all of the “artificial woodland” areas is Franchet’s cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster franchetii*). This and French broom are common components throughout these habitats. The understory herbs observed are mostly weedy species, such as Italian thistle, bristly dogtail grass (*Cynosurus echinatus*), and nit grass (*Gastridium phleoides*). Native plants observed are relatively common and competitive species, such as creeping snowberry and rough hedgesettle. A few of the openings within olive groves that were planted along steeper hillslopes featured at least a few native plants, including significant stands of foothill needle grass (*Stipa lepida*).

Riparian Forest

Los Trancos Creek flows north along the eastern edge of the study area and supports 2.4 acres of riparian habitat. Los Trancos Creek supports a dense canopy of both true riparian and quasi-riparian tree species along with a similar diversity of shrubs, vines, and herbs that reflect the moist, shaded conditions as well as the influence of planted species. The highest overstory consists of the native white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*). There are also several large Northern California black walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), a species native to California but introduced to the study area. Growing among these species are white poplars, an introduced species that has likely spread well beyond its original planted location. There are also several arroyo willow, both in tree and shrub form.

The shrub and vine understory along the edge of Los Trancos Creek consists of red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), California blackberry, and the invasive greater periwinkle. Most other invasive species are more common beyond the tops of the stream banks, including French broom and English ivy, which are beginning to crowd out blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), California hazel (*Corylus cornuta*), and other native species. The herbaceous understory along the stream consisted of rosilla (*Helenium puberulum*), giant horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*), and clustered dock (*Rumex conglomeratus*). The less disturbed floodplain areas are occupied by cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), sweet cicely, and mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*).

3.1.2 Protected Trees

The Town seeks to protect tree species listed in **Table 3**. Per Portola Valley Municipal Code Section 15.12.070.A, trees of these species that meet or exceed either the circumference or diameter listed are considered to be “significant,” and require site development permits for removal even if they appear to be dead.

Table 3: Significant Tree Species

Species	Circumference	Diameter
Coast Live Oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>)	36"	11.5"
Black Oak (<i>Quercus kelloggii</i>)	36"	11.5"
Valley Oak (<i>Quercus lobata</i>)	36"	11.5"
Blue Oak (<i>Quercus douglasii</i>)	16"	5"
Coast Redwood (<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>)	54"	17.2"
Douglas-fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	54"	17.2"
California Bay Laurel (<i>Umbellularia californica</i>)	36"	11.5"
Big Leaf Maple (<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>)	24"	7.6"
Madrone (<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>)	24"	7.6"

Note: Circumference and diameter are measured fifty-four (54) inches above natural grade.

3.1.3 Invasive Species

The District has an [Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) Guidance Manual](#) to direct its management of harmful invasive plants and animals on preserves, with particular emphasis on invasive plants that threaten rare native species or sensitive natural communities. Applying adaptive management practices, District staff update work plans on an annual basis based on prior treatment results, new environmental conditions, and any new invasive species sightings. Nonchemical techniques for invasive species management, including prevention, pulling, cutting, digging, and mowing, are considered before chemical methods.

Ongoing grassland management at the Hawthorns Area includes timed mowing of invasive yellow star thistle. The District’s Natural Resources Department is working with contractors to perform grassland monitoring for informing the best timing to mow the

invasive, non-native weeds to promote native plant generation. Volunteers also actively remove highly flammable French broom, especially along roadways.

3.1.4 Wildlife

Most wildlife species found within the Hawthorns Area also occur within the surrounding semi-urban residential areas. Common bird species often seen foraging and hunting in the oak woodlands and grasslands include: Anna’s hummingbird, America robin, California scrub jay, dark-eyed junco, cooper’s hawk, and turkey vultures. California ground squirrels, bobcats, and dusky footed woodrats are present throughout the site, with the woodrats being found in abundance within the olive groves which are an introduced food source. Gopher snakes and rattlesnakes can be found investigating rodent burrows or basking in the sun for thermoregulation. Owls and bats are often found roosting in the onsite structures. Wide ranging animals such as Columbian black tailed deer and mountain lions also move across the landscape, and local residents have observed a coyote den at the property.

More complete lists of wildlife species can be found in **Table 4**, which identifies common vertebrate species expected to occur at the Hawthorns Area,^{4,5} and **Table 5**, which identifies *special status* wildlife species with potential to occur at the Hawthorns Area.⁶ *Special status* species included are those that are state or federally listed as threatened, rare, endangered, species of special concern, or candidate species.

Habitat Connectivity

Providing habitat connectivity across this human modified landscape is important for wildlife to find food, shelter, and mates. Much of the Hawthorns Area is surrounded by fencing. When fencing is present, habitat connectivity for wildlife can be provided by using wildlife friendly fence design to allow passage of animals under, through, or over the fence especially at key locations (corners, waterways, etc.). In some instances, fencing may be used to direct animals away from roadways or other high-risk areas. In order to maintain and enhance wildlife passage across and through the Hawthorns Area, wildlife friendly fence design principles will be incorporated during the site planning process.

Table 4: Hawthorns Area Wildlife

Common name	Scientific Name
<i>Birds</i>	
Acorn woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
American crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Allen’s hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>
American goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
American kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Anna’s hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>
Ash-throated flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>
Band-tailed pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Barn swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Bell’s vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>
Bewick’s wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Black phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>

⁴ Natural Resources Database. 2022. Observations of fauna from nearby Windy Hill open space Preserves (with the exception of waterfowl that are unlikely to be found at Hawthorns). December 15, 2021 Update. <http://nrdb.org>. Accessed May 2022.

⁵ Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. 2021. Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

⁶ Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. 2021.

Common name	Scientific Name
Black-chinned sparrow	<i>Spizella atrogularis</i>
Black-headed grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>
Blackpoll warbler	<i>Setophaga striata</i>
Black-throated gray warbler	<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>
Blue-gray gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>
Brewer's blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>
Brown creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>
Brown-headed cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Bullock's oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>
Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>
California quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>
California scrub-jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>
California thrasher	<i>Toxostoma redivivum</i>
California towhee	<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>
Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Cassin's vireo	<i>Vireo cassinii</i>
Chestnut-backed chickadee	<i>Poecile rufescens</i>
Chipping sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Cliff swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>
Common raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Cooper's hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
Dark-eyed junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
Downy woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>
European starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>
Fox sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>
Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
Golden-crowned kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>
Golden-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>
Great blue heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Great horned owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>
Hairy woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>
Hermit thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
Hermit warbler	<i>Setophaga occidentalis</i>
House finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>

Common name	Scientific Name
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
House wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Indigo bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>
Lawrence's goldfinch	<i>Spinus lawrencei</i>
Lazuli bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>
Lesser goldfinch	<i>Spinus psaltria</i>
Lewis's woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Macgillivray's warbler	<i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Mourning dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Nashville warbler	<i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>
Northern flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
Northern mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Northern rough-winged swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Northern Saw-whet owl	<i>Aegolius acadicus</i>
Nuttall's woodpecker	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>
Oak titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>
Orange-crowned warbler	<i>Oreothlypis celata</i>
Pacific wren	<i>Troglodytes pacificus</i>
Pacific slope flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>
Pine siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>
Prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>
Purple finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>
Red crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Red-breasted nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>
Red-breasted sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i>
Red-shouldered hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Red-tailed hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Red-winged blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Rock pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Rough-legged hawk	<i>Buteo lagopus</i>
Ruby-crowned kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
Rufous hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>
Rufous-crowned sparrow	<i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>

Common name	Scientific Name
Sage sparrow	<i>Amphispiza belli</i>
Say's phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>
Sharp-shinned hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Snowy egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Song sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Spotted towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
Steller's jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>
Swainson's thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>
Tennessee warbler	<i>Oreothlypis peregrina</i>
Townsend's warbler	<i>Setophaga townsendi</i>
Tree swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Turkey vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Varied thrush	<i>Ixoreus naevius</i>
Violet-green swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>
Warbling vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>
Western bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>
Western kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>
Western meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>
Western screech-owl	<i>Megascops kennicottii</i>
Western tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>
Western wood-pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>
White-breasted nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
White-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
White-throated sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>
Wild turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>
Wilson's warbler	<i>Cardellina pusilla</i>
Wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>
Yellow-rumped warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>
<i>Mammals</i>	
Black-tailed jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>
Botta's pocket gopher	<i>Thomomys bottae</i>
Broad-footed mole	<i>Scapanus latimanus</i>
Brush rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus bachmani</i>
California ground squirrel	<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>
California myotis	<i>Myotis californicus</i>

Common name	Scientific Name
California pocket mouse	<i>Peromyscus californicus</i>
California vole	<i>Microtus californicus</i>
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>
Deer mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>
Gray fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>
House mouse	<i>Mus musculus</i>
Long-tailed weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>
Merriam's chipmunk	<i>Tamias merriami</i>
Mexican free-tailed bat	<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>
Mountain lion	<i>Puma concolor</i>
Columbian black-tailed deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus columbianus</i>
Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>
Striped skunk	<i>Mephitis sp.</i>
Virginia opossum	<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>
Western gray squirrel	<i>Sciurus griseus</i>
Reptiles	
California alligator lizard	<i>Elgaria multicarinata</i>
California kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis getula californiae</i>
Coast gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis elegans terrestris</i>
Coast range fence lizard	<i>Sceloporus occidentalis bocourtii</i>
Northern pacific rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus oreganus</i>
Pacific gopher snake	<i>Pituophis catenifer</i>
Pacific ringneck snake	<i>Diadophis punctatus</i>
Red-eared slider*	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>
Santa Cruz garter snake	<i>Thamnophis atratus</i>
Sharp-tailed snake	<i>Contia tenuis</i>
Skilton's skink	<i>Plestiodon skiltonianus</i>
Western pond turtle	<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>
Western yellow-bellied racer	<i>Coluber constrictor mormon</i>
Amphibians	
American bullfrog*	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>
Arboreal salamander	<i>Aneides lugubris</i>
California giant salamander	<i>Dicamptodon ensatus</i>
California newt	<i>Taricha torosa</i>
California slender salamander	<i>Batrachoseps attenuatus</i>
California toad	<i>Anaxyrus boreas halophilus</i>

Common name	Scientific Name
Ensatina salamander	<i>Ensatina eschscholtzii</i>
Rough-skinned newt	<i>Taricha granulosa</i>
Sierran tree frog	<i>Pseudacris sierra</i>
Yellow-eyed ensatina	<i>Ensatina eschscholtzii xanthoptica</i>
<i>Fish</i>	
Threespine stickleback	<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>
Prickly sculpin	<i>Cottus asper</i>
Speckled dace	<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i>
Hitch	<i>Lavinia exilicauda</i>
Sacramento Sucker	<i>Catostomus occidentalis</i>
California Roach	<i>Hesperoleucus symmetricus</i>
Rainbow trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
Common carp*	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>
White crappie*	<i>Pomoxis annularis</i>
Brown bullhead*	<i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i>
Mosquitofish*	<i>Gambusia affinis</i>
Largemouth bass*	<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>
Bluegill*	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>

*Denotes non-native species

Table 5: Wildlife Special Status Species Potential to Occur

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Status ¹	Habitat	Potential to Occur
<i>Birds</i>			
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	SE / SP	Occurs mainly along seacoasts, rivers, and lakes; nests in tall trees or in cliffs, occasionally on electrical towers. Feeds mostly on fish but will also feed on large carcasses. Mature tall trees are used for roosting.	Low - absent as breeder. In the Program area, the bald eagle occurs primarily as a migrant and winter visitor and is rare during the summer months (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2021). Although there are no known nesting records from any District preserve, this species has nested east of Lexington Reservoir, just north of Bear Creek Redwoods OSP, in recent years, and it has also nested at Crystal Springs Reservoir, from 2013 through 2015. Potentially suitable nesting habitat is present at Guadalupe Reservoir, immediately adjacent to Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve. This species is currently known to occur in District preserves only as a nonbreeding forager, but it could potentially nest in preserves, particularly those close to lakes, such as Bear Creek Redwoods, El Sereno, and Sierra Azul Preserves.

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Status ¹	Habitat	Potential to Occur
Bryant's savannah sparrow (<i>Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus</i>)	CSSC	Nests in extensive grasslands in the Santa Cruz Mountains.	Moderate. Unconfirmed but potential to occur in the southwest grassland on the Hawthorns Area.
Grasshopper sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>)	CSSC (nesting)	Breeds and forages in grasslands, meadows, fallow fields, and pastures.	Moderate. Unconfirmed but potential to occur in the southwest grassland on the Hawthorns Area.
Least Bell's vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>)	FE / SE	Breeds in shrubs and small trees in riparian and non-riparian habitat. Dependent on dense shrub layer in California.	Low. Though there was an individual occurrence in Menlo Park, species not likely to be present to breed. Local range does not extend north of Castle Rock State Park.
Northern harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	CSSC (breeding)	Breed in large, undisturbed tracts of wetlands and grasslands including dry uplands. Winter in range of habitats with low vegetation.	Moderate. Potential to occur during breeding and non-breeding seasons in the southern grasslands of Hawthorns Area.
Olive-sided flycatcher (<i>Contopus cooperi</i>)	CSSC	Breed in montane and northern coniferous forests. Occupy a range of elevations, usually in mid to high elevation forests.	Moderate. Unconfirmed but potential to occur in the woodland/forested sections of Hawthorns Area.
Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>)	SP	Forages in many habitats; nests on cliffs and tall bridges and buildings.	Low. Has a low likelihood to breed at Hawthorns because there are no substantial rock outcroppings, but area may provide roosting/foraging habitat.
Willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii brewsteri</i>)	SE	Nests in dense willow thickets in riparian woodlands.	Moderate - absent as breeder. Although this species historically bred in the San Francisco Bay Area and central coast, it was extirpated decades ago. Small numbers of birds from more northerly populations occur on District lands during spring and fall migration.
White-tailed kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>)	SP	Nests in tall shrubs and trees, forages in grasslands, marshes, and ruderal habitats.	High. Grasslands within the Hawthorns Area provide suitable breeding and foraging habitat.
Yellow warbler (<i>Setophaga petechia</i>)	CSSC (breeding)	Breeds in thickets and disturbed or regrowing habitats, particularly along riparian areas and wetlands.	Moderate. Potential to occur during breeding season in deciduous thickets, around springs, or along Los Trancos Creek.
Mammals			
American badger (<i>Taxidea taxus</i>)	CSSC	Burrows in grasslands and occasionally in infrequently disked agricultural areas.	Low. No record of occurrence on site but low potential to occur due to suitable grassland habitat.
San Francisco dusky footed woodrat (<i>Neotoma fuscipesannectens</i>)	CSSC	Nests in a variety of habitats including riparian areas, oak woodlands, and scrub.	High. The Hawthorns Area provides suitable nesting and foraging habitat for this relatively common species. Stick nests may be placed in trees, shrubs, or on the ground. This species may also nest in and around old structures.
Townsend's big eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>)	SC / CSSC	Roosts in caves and mine tunnels, and occasionally in deep crevices in trees or in abandoned buildings, in a variety of habitats.	High. This species has been detected in buildings at the Hawthorns Area.
Amphibians			

Common Name (Scientific Name)	Status ¹	Habitat	Potential to Occur
California red-legged frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>)	FT / CSSC	Uses streams, freshwater pools, and ponds with emergent or overhanging vegetation as breeding and nonbreeding aquatic habitat. It can disperse through a variety of habitats, such as grassland or woodland, particularly during the wet season.	Low. No record of occurrence on site, but the San Francisquito Creek watershed provides habitat for the California red-legged frog (CRLF) primarily in the upper reaches. CRLF has been observed within District preserves upstream and there was one observation about 1.5 miles downstream from Hawthorns, but CRLF has low potential to occur. However, while the short reach of Los Trancos Creek within Hawthorns is likely not significant for habitat continuity, it may provide CRLF habitat during wet years.
Foothill yellow-legged frog (<i>Rana boylei</i>)	SE / CSSC	Occurs in a variety of habitats in coast ranges, but all contain partially shaded shallow streams and riffles with a rocky substrate.	Low. Historic occurrence within the nearby El Corte de Madera Creek watershed. This species is considered extirpated in the local area.
<i>Fish</i>			
Central California Coast steelhead (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>)	FT	Cool streams with suitable spawning habitat and conditions allowing migration between spawning and marine habitats.	Moderate. Los Trancos Creek is designated as critical habitat for California central coast Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) of steelhead. ⁷ Within the Hawthorns Area, Los Trancos Creek lacks channel complexity, such as scour pools and instream wood, and the low summer flows limit rearing habitat despite the prevalence of coarse bedload. While the short reach of Los Trancos Creek within the Hawthorns Area is likely not significant for habitat continuity, it may provide steelhead habitat during wet years.

¹Status Codes: FE = Federally Endangered; FT = Federally Threatened; FC = Candidate for Federal Listing; SE = State Endangered; ST = State Threatened; SC = Candidate for State Listing; CSSC = California Species of Special Concern; SP = State listed as Fully Protected

3.1.5 Aquatic Resources

In spring 2022, the District contracted Stillwater Sciences, Inc., to assess water and wetland resources at the Hawthorns Area, which include Los Trancos Creek and three small riverine intermittent streambed drainages. Classified as a riverine upper perennial waterbody with an unconsolidated bottom, Los Trancos Creek flows from Monte Bello Ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains to its confluence with San Francisquito Creek at Stanford University. Los Trancos Creek meanders along the eastern edge of the Hawthorns Area and although it flows year-round, it is prone to low flows or complete drying during droughts. Channel erosion is minimal but several channel failures/cut banks along the opposite side of the creek from District land may eventually need stabilizing. Runoff from Los Trancos Road into the creek at the culverted road crossing (gate WH10) could impair downstream water quality, but the runoff occurs along the San Mateo County right of way and outside of District land. As stated in **Section 3.1.4**, Los Trancos Creek is designated as critical habitat for California central coast steelhead.

Regulatory Context

Clean Water Act

Under [Section 404 of the Clean Water Act](#) (CWA) and [Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act](#), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has jurisdiction over all Waters of the U.S., including wetlands and waters currently, previously, or potentially used in interstate or foreign commerce. The Hawthorns Area contains 0.30 acres of potential Waters of the U.S. subject to the USACE's

⁷ National Marine Fisheries Service. 2005. Endangered and Threatened Species: Designation of Critical Habitat for Seven Evolutionarily Significant Units of Pacific Salmon and Steelhead in California; Final Rule. FR Doc. 05-16389. Part II. 50 CFR. Part 226. Vol. 70. No. 170: pp. 52488-52627. September 2, 2005.

jurisdiction (see **Table 6**). For additional details and maps pertaining to Waters of the United States at and around the Hawthorns Area, see the **Supplemental Figures** section at the end of the report.

Table 6: Potential Waters of the U.S. Within the Hawthorns Area

Feature	Classification	Acres
Los Trancos Creek	Riverine, Upper Perennial, unconsolidated bottom (cobble-gravel)	0.24
Drainage	Riverine, Intermittent Streambed	0.06
Total		0.30

Furthermore, Section 303(d) of the CWA authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist states, territories, and authorized tribes in listing impaired waters and developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for impaired waterbodies. A TMDL establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a waterbody and serves as the starting point or planning tool for restoring water quality. In general, once a waterbody has been added to a state’s list of impaired waters it stays there until the state develops a TMDL and the EPA approves it.⁸

Los Trancos Creek is a tributary to San Francisquito Creek, which is designated as a 303(d) impaired waterbody due to trash and sedimentation.⁹ Historic and current land uses throughout the San Francisquito Creek watershed have altered the forms and functions of San Francisquito Creek’s channels, exacerbating sedimentation and resulting in erosion, runoff, water quality degradation, and compromised riparian habitat for native fish species.¹⁰

California Riparian Habitat Conservation Act

Chapter 4.1 of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Fish and Game Code establishes the California Riparian Habitat Conservation Act, which aims to protect California’s rivers and riparian resources. The Fish and Game Code acknowledges the necessity of keeping certain lands such as riparian and wetland areas in their natural condition in order to preserve their environmental value. Preservation and enhancement of riparian habitat is a primary concern of the CDFW and the Wildlife Conservation Board, and any activities proposed in the vicinity of riparian habitats should be coordinated with the CDFW.

Town Creek Setback Ordinance

The Town regulates land use within a specified distance of creeks to protect the waterway. For Building Permits and Site Development Permits, the Town’s Creek Setback Ordinance¹¹ stipulates that setbacks may be measured from either the top of the creek bank (TOB) or the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) at the discretion of the property owner. For parcels of 2.5 acres or more, a 55-foot buffer from TOB or a 60-foot buffer from the OHWM is required.

3.1.6 Wildland Fire Management

The District’s ongoing land stewardship includes proactive, year-round wildland fire prevention, preparation, and response. The District adopted a [Wildland Fire Resiliency Program](#) in 2021 to increase ecologically sensitive vegetation management District-wide. Under this program, wildland fire severity and risk are reduced through vegetation management with a focus on ecological health and wildland fire resilience, in alignment with the District’s mission and policies. Moreover, as part of the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, the District is developing a Prescribed Fire Plan to reintroduce prescribed fire to District lands in partnership with twelve fire agencies, including the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE).

The District implements required wildland fire prevention activities at the Hawthorns Area, as well as discretionary measures, including mowing along roadways, ridgetops and a staging area for wildland fire crews, thinning specific vegetative fuels, and maintaining 100’ of defensible space around all structures. Under direction from the District, Grassroots Ecology, a local non-profit organization focused on restoring local ecosystems, works with volunteers to pull highly flammable French broom, especially from ignition points along roadways.

⁸ <https://www.epa.gov/tmdl/overview-listing-impaired-waters-under-cwa-section-303d?msclkid=63484a0ea60911eca1da89a12b6c7dc9>

⁹ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb2/water_issues/programs/TMDLs/2016_303d/00684.shtml#35585

¹⁰ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/TMDLs/sanfranciscitosediment/sanfranciscitosedimentbudget.pdf

¹¹ No. 2007-369, Chapter 18.59 of Title 18 of the Portola Valley Municipal Code

In accordance with the [Woodside Fire Protection District Ordinance](#) Perimeter Property Line Clearance, the District is required to remove vegetative fuel materials or litter at least 50 feet from the Hawthorns Area property line and 100 feet from any neighboring structure. This includes materials such as dead weeds and dry annual grasses that are capable of being easily ignited.

3.2 PUBLIC ACCESS

The Hawthorns Area is currently closed to the public and does not contain designated public access facilities. However, as the 2014 Measure AA Open Space Bond and Vision Plan established a goal of opening the Hawthorns Area to the public, public access considerations in alignment with the conservation easement are inherent to the Hawthorns Area Plan planning process.

Existing infrastructure at the Hawthorns Area includes driveways, internal ranch roads, and informal pathways that may provide future public access opportunities and connections with the surrounding Town road and trail network. The District has retained a transportation consultant to characterize existing traffic conditions and evaluate lines of sight at the existing driveways to determine if these access points could provide safe ingress and egress to the Hawthorns Area. Refer to Section 4.2 for a discussion of public access opportunities and constraints.

3.3 LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The 2003 [Town of Portola Valley General Plan](#) (General Plan) includes a [Trails and Paths Element](#), which envisions a comprehensive trail and path system throughout the Town. **Table 7** describes local trails and pathways near the Hawthorns Area, and **Figure 2: Town Trails** depicts these trails and pathways.

- **Coal Mine Ridge Nature Preserve:** Coal Mine Ridge Nature Preserve is a privately owned, 235-acre open space preserve that is a part of Portola Valley Ranch. Public trail access for equestrian use and hiking is provided under an easement granted to the Town, but the easement applies only to the public trails and does not permit public access to the rest of the open space. Dogs and bikes are prohibited on the trails in Coal Mine Ridge Nature Preserve.
- **Pearson-Arastradero Preserve:** Pearson-Arastradero Preserve is located east of the Hawthorns Area and managed by the City of Palo Alto. Bounded by Los Altos Hills, Stanford University, and Portola Valley, the 622-acre preserve contains over ten miles of recreation trails open to pedestrians, equestrians, bicyclists, and dogs on-leash. This preserve could facilitate future trail alignments for the envisioned Bay to Ridge Trail, including the planned Palo Alto to the Sea Trail.¹²
- **Foothills Nature Preserve:** Bounded by Portola Valley, Los Altos Hills, Pearson-Arastradero Preserve and Los Trancos Open Space Preserve, Foothills Nature Preserve is managed by the City of Palo Alto and encompasses 1,400 acres of chaparral, oak woodlands, and grassland ecosystems. The preserve includes fifteen miles of hiking trails open only to pedestrians. While horses are not permitted anywhere in the preserve, bicyclists are permitted on paved roads. The preserve is open to dogs on leash on weekdays; however, no dogs are permitted on weekends or holidays. Foothills Nature Preserve is also open to fishing and canoeing at Boronda Lake, as well as seasonal camping at Towle Campground. In the future, Foothills Nature Preserve could facilitate future trail alignments for the envisioned Bay to Ridge Trail, which would ultimately include the planned Palo Alto to the Sea Trail.
- **Stanford Dish Area:** The Stanford Dish Area is located in the foothills west of Stanford University, is owned and operated by Stanford University, and is open to the general public. Named for a radio antenna constructed in 1961 and still actively used today, the Stanford Dish Area supports rare species, cultural resources, and academic study and offers nearly four miles of paved recreational pedestrian trails. No dogs, horses, or bicycles are allowed anywhere in the Stanford Dish Area.
- **Stanford Perimeter Trail:** Connecting recreational areas in the foothills to those in the Palo Alto Baylands, the Stanford Perimeter Trail is 3.4-mile, multi-use trail built along Junipero Serra Boulevard, Stanford Avenue, and El Camino Real. The trail was constructed in partnership between Stanford University and the City of Palo Alto and is included in the City of Palo Alto's Master Plan for Parks, Trails, Open Space & Recreation. The trail is open to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve:** Located south of Sand Hill Road and west of Interstate 280, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve is owned and operated by Stanford University primarily for conservation and scientific research. The 1,193-acre Preserve is open to the public in a limited capacity through scheduled, docent-led tours from October through May. Other recreational uses are not permitted.
- **Windy Hill Open Space Preserve:** Situated approximately one mile west of the Hawthorns Area in the Town, the 1,414-acre Windy Hill Open Space Preserve is owned and managed by the District. The Preserve includes over 13 miles of hiking trails, including a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Bicyclists, equestrians, and dogs on-leash are permitted on designated trails in the Preserve.

¹² The ultimate vision of the Bay to Ridge Trail as defined by the City of Palo Alto is to connect parks and open spaces from the San Francisco Bay to the peninsula ridgeline across the broader Palo Alto region, encompassing Foothills Nature Preserve and Arastradero Preserve in the southwest as well as the Baylands Preserve and other shoreline parks and natural open spaces to the northeast. For more information, see City of Palo Alto's *Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan*.

In addition to the open spaces within the immediate vicinity of the Hawthorns Area, there are numerous parks and preserves located throughout the broader San Francisco Peninsula.

- **Skyline Region** – The Skyline Region of the Santa Cruz Mountains includes parks and open space preserves generally located along Highway 35, including Huddart County Park, Wunderlich County Park, Pescadero Creek County Park, Purisima Creek Redwoods, El Corte de Madera Creek, La Honda Creek, Russian Ridge, Coal Creek, Skyline Ridge, Long Ridge, Monte Bello, and Saratoga Gap. The Bay Area Ridge Trail, a regional trail system circumnavigating the San Francisco Bay Area, connects many preserves and San Mateo County parks in the Skyline Region.
- **Foothills Region** – The Foothills Region of the Santa Cruz Mountains encompasses lower-elevation recreational areas between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the urbanized Peninsula. Santa Clara County parks and open space preserves in the Foothills Region include Stevens Creek County Park, Upper Stevens Creek County Park, Rancho San Antonio County Park and Preserve, Teague Hill, Thornewood, Los Trancos, Picchetti Ranch, and Fremont Older.

Table 7: Local and Regional Trails

Map No.	Name	Description	Allowable Uses			
			Pedestrian	Equestrian	Bicycle	Dogs On-leash
1	Alpine Trail	The Alpine Trail parallels Alpine Road on the south side of the road from the Ladera community near I-280 to Portola Road, eventually connecting with the Alpine Trail as it extends into the Santa Cruz Mountains. Between Los Trancos Road and Saddleback Drive, Alpine Trail is an unpaved path separated from Alpine Road by a vegetated berm elevated several feet above the roadway. Bicycles and dogs on-leash are only allowed on Alpine Trail north of the Alpine Road / Portola Road intersection.	X	X	X	X
2	Alpine Road	Alpine Road is a major arterial roadway through the Town. The following portions of Alpine Road adjacent to the Hawthorns Area are officially designated as part of the Town's trail and path network: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bicycle Route: Alpine Road from Los Trancos Road to Saddleback Drive. ▪ Bicycle Path: On the north side of Alpine Road from Los Trancos Road to Portola Road. 	X	X	X	X
3	Dwight F. Crowder Path	The Dwight F. Crowder Path is a multi-use thoroughway north of Alpine Road from the Portola Trail east towards Central Portola Valley and intersects with the Nathhorst and Hillbrook Trails.	X	X	X	X
4	Sweet Springs Trail	The Sweet Springs Trail extends from Alpine Trail near the western corner of the Hawthorns Area and extends south into the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood. This is a private trail owned by Portola Valley Ranch that is accessible to the public. Hiking and equestrian uses are allowed on this trail; bicycles are prohibited.	X	X		X
5	Los Trancos Trail	The Los Trancos Trail is located on the east side of Los Trancos Road along the eastern boundary of the Hawthorns Area. The unpaved trail begins at Los Trancos Creek and extends to the north parallel to Los Trancos Road until it terminates at the Alpine Trail.	X	X	-	X
6	Firethorne Trail	The Firethorne Trail spans from the Los Trancos Trail to the Alpine Trail at the northeastern corner of the Hawthorns Area.	X	X	-	X
7	Hillbrook Trail	The Hillbrook Trail connects to the Dwight F. Crowder Path a few hundred feet southwest of the northeastern corner of the Hawthorns Area and extends north parallel to Hillbrook Road.	X	X	-	X
8	Nathhorst Trail	Situated north of the Hawthorns Area and southwest of the Hillbrook Trail, the unpaved Nathhorst Trail runs adjacent to Nathhorst Road and connects to the Dwight F. Crowder Path to the east, to the Veronica Trail to the northwest, and to the Portola Trail to the southwest.	X	X	-	X
9	Veronica Trail	The Veronica Trail originates at the Nathhorst Trail and extends along Veronica Road north of the Hawthorns Property.	X	X	-	X
10	Portola Trail	Located north of the Hawthorns Area, the Portola Trail is the extension of the Dwight F. Crowder Path to the west following Portola Road.	X	X	X	X
11	Indian Crossing Trail	The Indian Crossing Trail originates at Alpine Road west of the Hawthorns Area and continues south toward the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood.	X	X	-	X
12	Valley Oak Trail	The Valley Oak Trail is a multiuse trail Town trail that spans the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood and comes to a terminus near the southwestern corner of the Hawthorns Area.	X	X	X	X



Town of Portola Valley Public Trail Network

Hawthorns Area

Building

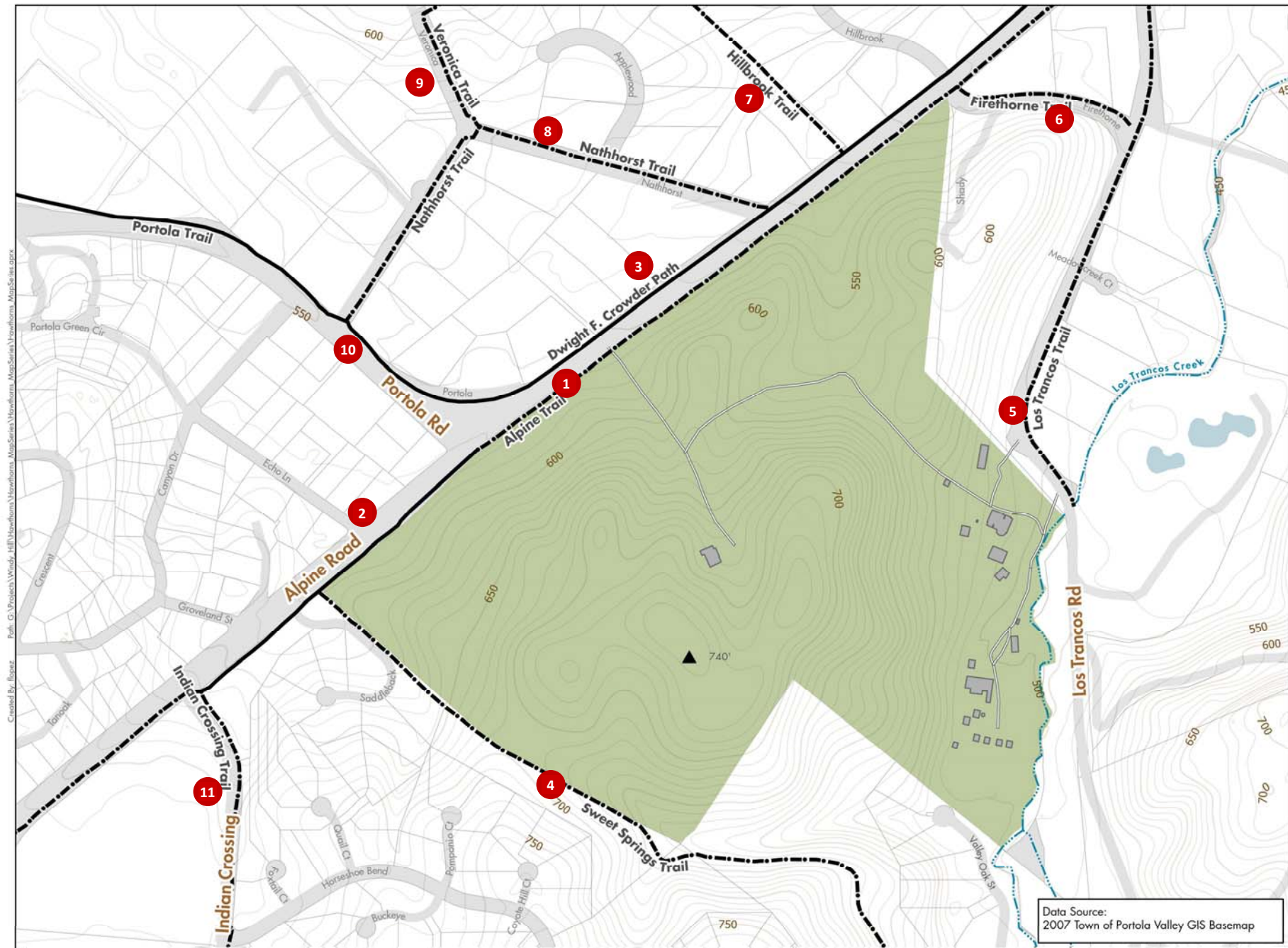
Trail use type

Equestrian &
Pedestrian Trail,
Dogs On Leash

Bicycle, Equestrian,
& Pedestrian Trail,
Dogs On Leash



Data Source:
2007 Town of Portola Valley GIS Basemap



Created by: fuser
Path: G:\Projects\Work\011\Hawthorns\MapSeries\MapSeries\Hawthorns_MapSeries_VowdIcons_MapSeries.aprx

Figure 2: Town Trails

3.4 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

3.4.1 Hawthorns Historic District

In 2013, the District retained Knapp Architects to prepare a [Historic Resource Study](#) (HRS) for the Hawthorns Area, which concluded that the property is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district because it retains landscape features and structures that reflect the social, agricultural, and architectural history of San Francisco Peninsula estate property in the late 19th century. Resources determined eligible for the National Register are automatically eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources. Furthermore, the [Historic Element](#) of the Town's General Plan identifies two historic resources at the property: (1) the 'Allen-Woods House and grounds,' and (2) 'Vegetation at Allen-Woods House.' As an eligible historic district, the Hawthorns Area meets the definition of an historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Character-Defining Features

Table 8 and **Figure 3** identify character-defining features at the Hawthorns Area, which represent the prominent or distinctive aspects, qualities, or characteristics that contribute significantly to its physical character and convey its historical significance. Character-defining features for the Hawthorns Historic District are those that convey its relationship to the history of country estates in Portola Valley during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These attributes include built structures and natural features, including the natural topography, open grasslands, and expansive vistas.

The HRS categorized character-defining structures at the Hawthorns Area as *primary* and *secondary historic district contributors*. In this context, primary contributors are those that are important in defining the historic character of the property and that should be retained or only minimally altered. Secondary features are less critical in contributing to the property's historic character and may undergo greater change without substantially impacting the property's overall historic character.¹³

The HRS categorized character-defining landscape elements as *contributing features* and *non-contributing features*. In this context, *contributing features* define the historic character of the property and that should be retained or only minimally altered, whereas *non-contributing features* do not communicate the property's overall historic character.¹⁴

Integrity

When a property is historically significant, the property's integrity is assessed to verify that it retains the physical characteristics which convey its historic significance. Several ancillary structures are in various states of disrepair from dilapidated finishes to total collapse. In their current state, the remaining portions are a scattered array of construction materials with no sense of their original architectural configuration or use. As such, these particular ancillary buildings no longer retain integrity to contribute to the property's historic significance.

Historic Complex Structural Assessment

In 2022, the District enlisted Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. to conduct a structural assessment of the buildings present on the Hawthorns Area and provide an overview of the necessary actions needed for stabilization, restoration, rehabilitation and reuse, and demolition as a separate project from the Hawthorns Area Plan process. Based on the information provided, the Board will determine the next steps for the management of the Historic Complex, at which time public access considerations for this area will be ascertained.

¹³ <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/interiors-primary-secondary.htm>

¹⁴ <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/interiors-primary-secondary.htm>

Table 8: Features at the Hawthorns Area (see Figure 3)

Feature Name	Description	Contribution to Historic District
<i>Buildings and Structures</i>		
Hawthorns House	Approximately 9,000 square foot, wood-framed, shingle-style two-story residence with unfinished basement and finished attic. Constructed in 1887.	Primary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Garage	Approximately 2,200 square foot, wood-framed one-story structure with a first-floor garage and small attic. Constructed in 1916.	Primary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Cottage	Approximately 1,300 square foot, wood-framed structure with partially finished attic and split-level interior. Constructed around 1885.	Primary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Lower Barn	Approximately 4,400 square foot, wood-framed one-story structure with a large central side-sliding barn door flanked by secondary swinging doors. Constructed in 1887.	Primary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Upper Barn	Rectangular plan with inset porch, stalls and shed; corrugated steel roof; wood frame on grade; dirt floors. Construction date unknown.	Secondary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Raccoon Sheds	Appear to have been shelter enclosures. Rectangular plan; corrugated steel roof; wood frame on grade; dirt floor. Construction date unknown.	Secondary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Horse Sheds	Appear to have been a series of shelters. Square plan, open three sides; corrugated steel roof; wood framing; rough concrete floor; central wooden trough. Construction date unknown.	Secondary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Silo	Cylindrical storage container clad in vertical concrete panels with metal rods wrapped horizontally at intervals along the height; ladder enclosed by a cylindrical metal attachment on the exterior; roof is sheet metal with a conical raised cap for ventilation. Construction date unknown.	Secondary character-defining feature, retains integrity
Shetland Pony Shed	Appears to have been shade device and may relate to Upper Barn. Rectangular plan, open on three sides; corrugated steel roof; wood frame on grade. Construction date unknown. Structure has collapsed and no longer retains integrity.	Originally a secondary character-defining feature, but no longer retains integrity and does not contribute to historic district.
Dog Sheds	Appear to have been shelter enclosures. Rectangular plan; corrugated steel roof; horizontal board finish; wood frame on grade; dirt floor. Construction date unknown. Structures have collapsed and no longer retain integrity.	Originally a secondary character-defining feature, but no longer retains integrity and does not contribute to historic district.
Carriage Shed	Appears to have been an open shelter at the south end and an enclosed space at the north end with stalls. Rectangular plan; corrugated steel roofs; wood frame on grade; dirt floor. Construction date unknown. Structure has partially collapsed and no longer retains integrity.	Originally a secondary character-defining feature, but no longer retains integrity and does not contribute to historic district.
Pump House	Rectangular plan; corrugated steel roof; wood frame on grade; concrete pad floor. Construction date unknown. Structure has collapsed and no longer retains integrity.	Originally a secondary character-defining feature, but no longer retains integrity and does not contribute to historic district.

Feature Name	Description	Contribution to Historic District
Coachman's Quarters	Appears to have been small living quarters at the north end, a central covered space, and grooming/tack room structure at the south end. Rectangular plan; corrugated steel roof; wood frame on grade. Construction date unknown. Structure has collapsed and no longer retains integrity.	Originally a secondary character-defining feature, but no longer retains integrity and does not contribute to historic district.
District Residence	A modern residence constructed in 1952 at 4411 Alpine Road is currently used as a District residence. The 4411 Alpine Road residence and associated driveway and landscaping do not contribute to the historic district.	Does not contribute to historic district.
<i>Landscape Features</i>		
Los Trancos Road Olive Grove	The Los Trancos Road olive grove encompasses approximately nine acres north of the Historic Complex and may have originally included up to 1,000 olive trees. These trees have not been pruned or tended for many years with sucker branches growing from the base of the trees, moss on trunks and limbs, and the encroachment of trees and brush within the edges of the grove.	Character-defining feature that contributes to the historic district.
Alpine Road Olive Grove	The Alpine Road olive grove encompasses approximately 2.5 acres in the southwestern corner of the property that was planted at an early date. This area is overgrown with oaks and brush to the extent that the rows of olive trees are no longer apparent within the expanse of wooded area along the western edge of the property. The condition and integrity of the Alpine Road Olive Grove has deteriorated so that it no longer contributes to the significance of the property and is no longer a character-defining feature.	Originally a character-defining feature but no longer contributes to historic district.
Hawthorn Trees and Shrubs	The Hawthorns Area was named for the small ornamental trees planted along Alpine Road and at the original Historic Entrance Driveway. The planting was originally maintained as a tall, pruned hedge about 12-15' high, but was removed when Alpine Road was widened in 1952. There are individual examples of hawthorns that have naturalized or self-seeded along Alpine Road at the southwestern edge of the property and scattered in the adjacent field and along the Historic Entrance Driveway. The original hawthorns hedge along Alpine Road is no longer extant, and the fugitive and volunteer hawthorns plants do not contribute to the property's historical significance.	Originally a character-defining feature but no longer exists and does not contribute to historic district.
Historic Entrance Driveway	The original entrance road to the Hawthorns property entered from Alpine Road about 500 yards northeast of the current driveway to the District Residence at 4411 Alpine Road. Trees were once planted evenly along each side of the Historic Entrance Driveway from Alpine Road to the ridgeline. The portion of this original driveway between Alpine Road and the olive grove is overgrown with vegetation and its roadbed is no longer extant; however, an entrance gate to this road is still in place in the fence line along Alpine Road. Oak trees recall the original driveway alignment and contribute to the overall historical character of the property.	The fence, gate, and oak trees delineating the original driveway all contribute to the historic district.

Feature Name	Description	Contribution to Historic District
Open Grasslands and Vistas	The open grasslands and expansive vistas to the surrounding ridges and distant mountains from the upper slopes of the open hillsides are associated with the pre-1952 development era.	Character-defining features that contribute to historic district.
Fences	Fences and remnants of fences (e.g., wooden posts, metal stakes, barbed wire) of varying types enclose the property and delineate internal uses and define the landscape's historical conditions.	Fences that define historic uses and layouts at the Hawthorns Area contribute to the historic district.
Terraced Area and Brick Oven	The terraced area, brick oven, and two retaining walls composed of stacked field stone at the north end of the Hawthorns House contribute to the historic district.	The terraced area and brick oven contribute to the historic district.
Internal Paths and Field Stone	<p>The property's internal road system consists of a series of single-lane dirt roads, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two entrances at Los Trancos Road • The road from the upper Los Trancos Road entrance that leads to the northwest corner of the Hawthorns House • The segment that runs along the front of the Hawthorn House • Road that is accessed from the lower Los Trancos Road entrance and leads out to the Lower Barn and field area • The driveway to the Garage • Segment that leads westward up through the olive grove (northwest of the Hawthorns House), over the ridge <p>The field stone edging and low retaining walls that line portions of the internal road system further contribute to the landscape's historic properties.</p>	With the exception of the asphalt driveway leading to the modern residence at 4411 Alpine Road, all paths on the Hawthorns property contribute to its historic designation.
Spatial Organization	<p>Two forms of spatial organization support the Hawthorns Area's historic classification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the large olive grove that stretches between the northern and southern boundaries on this eastern side of the ridgeline • the cluster of the three main residential buildings (the Hawthorn House, the Cottage, and the Garage) at the northern end of the historic district, as well as the agricultural area with the Barn and open field at its southern end. 	Spatial organization at the Hawthorns Area contributes to the historic district.
Natural Topography	The natural topography of the Hawthorns Area slopes steeply down from the ridge and runs through the central portion of the historic district toward Los Trancos Road and then gradually levels out as it approaches the eastern boundary of the property at Los Trancos Creek. This formation, as well as the manner in which the built features have been added to the site with minimal topographic modifications, contributes to the historic nature of the property.	Natural topography at the Hawthorns Area contributes to the historic district.

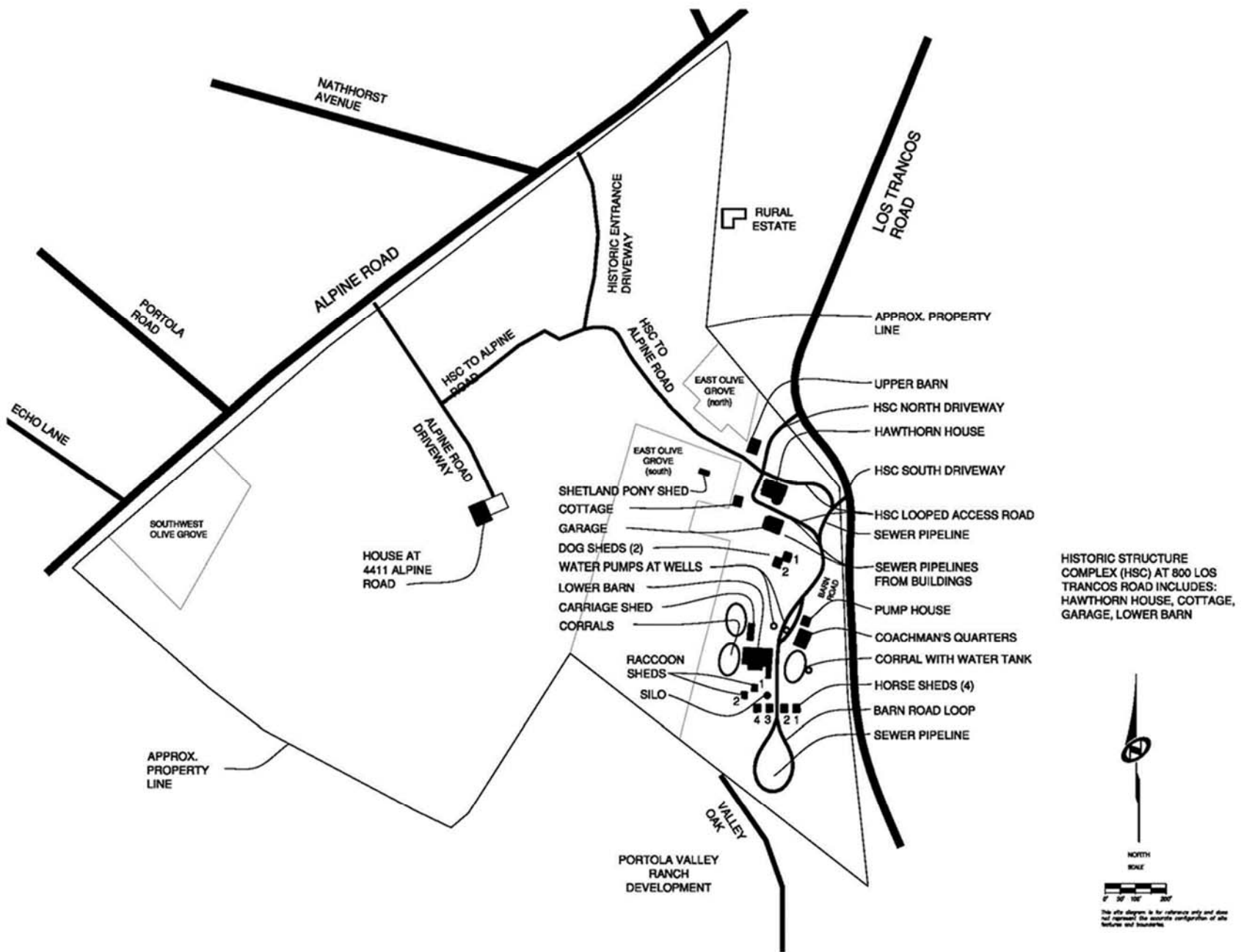


Figure 3: Hawthorns Historic District Features

3.4.2 *Historic and Cultural Resources*

Archaeological surveys conducted in 2018 and 2022 determined that the Hawthorns Area contains sensitive Native American resources. In general, portions of the Hawthorns Area within 200 feet of Los Trancos Creek may contain archaeological resources; the remainder of the Hawthorns Area has low archaeological sensitivity. Public access to the Los Trancos Creek areas of the Hawthorns Area could increase risk of degradation or damage to these resources. Coordination with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area will ensure privacy and respect to the sensitive and confidential nature of these resources.

3.5 AESTHETICS

The Hawthorns Area landscape includes low-elevation grassland hills and scenic ridgetops that afford panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay and Peninsula, the East Bay hills, and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Highpoints within the western half of the Hawthorns Area typically provide the most unobstructed sweeping vistas, although other grassland knolls throughout the property also provide open views of the region. Several portions of the Hawthorns Area (listed below) are visible from public rights-of-way, nearby trails, and adjacent Town neighborhoods.

- The Alpine Road frontage is visible from public areas and private parcels along the length of Alpine Road. This viewshed typically extends along the length of Alpine Road towards the Hawthorns Area until intervening vegetation and topography obstruct views.
- Grassland hills within the southwestern portion of the Hawthorns Area are visible from residences within Portola Valley Ranch, including Saddleback Drive, Horseshoe Bend, Quail Court, Pomponio Court, Coyote Hill Court, and Franciscan Ridge.
- A flat grassland along Los Trancos Creek within the southeastern portion of the Hawthorns Area is visible from residences along Valley Oak Street. Some structures that comprise the Historic Complex are also visible from these properties.
- Sections of the northeastern portion of the Hawthorns Area are visible from a single property located on Firethorn Way.
- The eastern portion of the Hawthorns Area is generally blocked by vegetation; however, portions of the Historic Complex are visible from Los Trancos Road and Los Trancos Trail.

3.5.1 *Alpine Road Scenic Corridor*

The approximately 10-mile Alpine Scenic Corridor links urbanized areas of the San Francisco Peninsula east of Highway 280 to rural Portola Valley. The [Alpine Scenic Corridor Plan](#), adopted as a part of the Town's 2003 General Plan, guides the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of this corridor.

Areas of Special Concern

The Alpine Scenic Corridor Plan establishes several areas of special concern that contribute to the natural quality of the scenic corridor. Of these areas of special concern, the Hawthorns Area is located within the immediate roadside, primary vista corridor, and secondary vista corridor, summarized below:

- **Immediate Roadside:** This is a band on either side of the roadway, generally 50 to 100 feet wide, which extends to trees, fences, banks, or other features that define the roadside area. This strip is of great importance to the scenic values of the corridor, where buildings, grading, clearing, planting, and access roads should be carefully regulated.
- **Primary Vista Corridor:** The lands in view beyond the roadside determine the character of the scenic corridor and are thus designated as the "Primary Vista Corridor." This corridor includes nearby ridges viewed from the road and the foreground, up to 1,000 feet, where long vistas extend up valleys beyond the corridor. The Scenic Corridor Plan does not prohibit building within this corridor, but construction and planting should be designed to be compatible with and retain the natural and rural appearance of the area.
- **Secondary Vista Corridor:** This includes hills in the middle distance and the land in views down open valleys, where all major projects should be carefully reviewed and stringently regulated to prevent any significant alterations of the natural scene.

The Scenic Corridor Plan includes a list of items of concern within the areas described above, with the added guidance that the degree of concern should be tempered based on the visual impact when viewed from areas along the road. Those items that appear relevant to the Area Plan are excerpted below.

- Points of access to Alpine Road should be limited to the maximum extent possible.
- Building setbacks along Alpine Road should be increased as necessary to reduce the feeling of encroachment on the road.
- Buildings and structures should be subservient to the natural landscape in design, materials, and color.
- Planting should be in keeping with the natural landscape, leaving native trees and open space grasslands where possible and using native plant materials or other drought resistant plants in keeping with the natural scene.
- Removal of trees or other native vegetation cover should be stringently controlled.

Special Setback Lines

Section 18.58.020(D) of the Town's Code of Ordinances (excerpted below) establishes 75-foot setbacks from the Alpine Road right-of-way from the town boundary at Ladera to Portola Road. Furthermore, all new residences and major additions are subject to review by the Town's Architectural and Site Control Commission. Such reviews require analysis with respect to the Alpine Scenic Corridor Plan. In any new developments with frontage on Alpine Road, care should be taken to preserve natural landforms and vegetation in close proximity to the road to protect the corridor.

Section 18.58.020 - Special setback lines—S (scenic). Special setback lines are established along streets to assure the provision of space for light, air, safety, circulation, and visual amenity, and to permit or require adjustment in the location of structures to observe unusual physical conditions.

Section 18.58.020D. Alpine Road—No structure shall be located closer than seventy-five feet to the right-of-way of Alpine Road in that section of Alpine Road lying between the northerly town limits and Portola Road.

3.6 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Operations and maintenance activities at the Hawthorns Area are contingent on several parameters, including the restrictions set by the conservation easement, the underlying geology, the potential presence of hazardous materials, the Town's land use and zoning policies, and the existing infrastructure.

3.6.1 Ground Movement

The Hawthorns Area is situated on relatively stable ground and the likelihood of ground movement is low. According to The Town's [Geologic](#) and [Ground Movement Potential Maps](#), the property is primarily characterized by level to moderately steep slopes underlain by greenstone and Whisky Hill Formation bedrock. Despite its stability, the property's thin soil mantle may undergo shallow land sliding, settlement, and soil creep. These minor ground movements are most likely to occur along the eastern and western boundaries of the property, where the geologic conditions are comparatively less stable. Near Los Trancos Creek, soils are comprised of unconsolidated granular material atop level ground and gentle slopes, which may be subject to liquefaction during strong earthquakes. Moreover, the western portion of the property is designated as an area with significant potential for downslope movement due to the unstable, unconsolidated, and thin constituent material atop gentle to moderately steep slopes. However, as no fault lines transect the Hawthorns Area, even these regions of comparatively less stable composite materials are unlikely to experience significant ground movement.

3.6.2 Hazardous Materials

The District conducted Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) to identify hazardous substances at the Hawthorns Area. The Phase I ESA compiled information from site research and field visits to identify conditions at the Hawthorns Area that may involve hazardous substances. The Phase II ESA entailed soil sampling and laboratory analysis to determine if hazardous contaminants at the Hawthorns Area occur at concentrations exceeding Environmental Screening Levels (ESLs), which are thresholds established by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board to protect human and environmental health.

The Phase I ESA identified two potentially hazardous property conditions:

1. Former agricultural use of the property, which is typically associated with the use of agricultural chemicals.
2. The presence of drums, solid waste, and other hazardous material containers observed within the Hawthorns Historic Complex.

Subsequent soil analysis conducted for the Phase II ESA determined that soils on the property do not contain hazardous agricultural residue, and that most of the Historic Complex does not contain hazardous debris. However, soils at two locations (the garage and the location of a former structure) contain elevated lead concentrations, which may pose a health risk to recreational users and construction workers if directly exposed to these soils.

In addition, the soil analysis also showed that locations within the garage and other areas used previously for car storage contain cobalt, lead, and nickel concentrations that exceed Construction Worker ESLs. Earthwork within these locations may pose a health risk to construction workers (Figures 3a-3b of the Phase II ESA).

The Phase II ESA recommended that either remediation or mitigation actions for the lead-impacted soils at the garage and former structure location occur prior to opening the Hawthorns Area to the public. Mitigation measures may include engineering controls to limit exposure to the impacted soil, such as encapsulating the soil or installing a barrier to prevent access to the impacted area. Remediation would likely include excavation and offsite disposal of the impacted soil in addition to confirmation sampling. The Phase II ESA also recommended that a Soil Management Plan be prepared should earthwork activities be conducted in areas impacted by elevated concentrations of cobalt, lead, and nickel.

3.6.3 Land Use and Zoning

Town General Plan Land Use Element

The [Land Use Element](#) of the Town's 2003 General Plan outlines specific guidelines for land occupancy and describes the location and distribution aspects of land uses, spatially delineated in the [Comprehensive Plan Map](#). There are four land use intensity categories for residential areas: low-medium, low, conservation residential and open residential. Portions of these residential areas are further classified as "residential open space preserves." The Hawthorns Area is classified as a *Residential Open Space Preserve* due to its visual properties and environmental constraints. Residential Open Space Preserves primarily serve as conduits for natural resource preservation but may also support recreational uses through public trails and pathways where appropriate. As such, land use at the Hawthorns Area must align with the following sections set forth by and excerpted verbatim from the Land Use Element:

- *2106a*: Portions of some of these residential areas are classified as "residential open space preserves." These preserves possess one or more of the following characteristics: slopes, canyons and ravines generally in excess of 30% in slope, unstable lands, lands of significant scenic value to the town, historic resources, riparian environments, and lands inaccessible without traversing potentially unstable lands. To the maximum extent possible, these preserves should be kept free of structures and left in a natural condition with respect to terrain and vegetation. New residential subdivisions should provide for the clustering of residences outside of residential open space preserves so that these areas are left undisturbed for visual enjoyment and limited local use. However, on lands also shown as open residential, residences might be appropriate, if clustering is not possible, if acceptable development standards for access, utilities and geologic stability can be met, and if scenic qualities and historic features are preserved. Low intensity recreation uses would be appropriate in residential open space preserves, and drainage and erosion control measures should be undertaken where necessary.
- *2106b*: The slope-intensity standards for the conservation residential and open residential categories recognize in part the overall problems of the development in areas with potential geologic instabilities. However, the intensity of development in individual developments should be further reduced as necessary to reflect specific geologic conditions encountered, to minimize significant visual impacts, to preserve scenic qualities and historic features, and to avoid high fire hazards and inadequate emergency access.
- *2109*: Superimposed upon the residential land use indicated on the comprehensive plan diagram is a tree symbol representing residential open space preserve. The residential open space preserve should be primarily a permanent open space but should in addition accommodate a variety of recreational uses well suited to the natural terrain and which preserve the continuity of native vegetation. Such uses include riding and hiking trails, informal play areas, scenic walks, picnic areas, and residences subject to suitable conditions (see foregoing standards). These areas can be either privately controlled by the local property owners or held by a public agency.
- *2138.4*: Individual sites should be landscaped attractively with native plants so as to integrate the entire development visually with its neighbors and the overall natural qualities of the planning area. Protecting residential areas from noise, unsightliness, odor and other nuisances should be accomplished through adequate landscape buffers that also enhance pedestrian access and through other appropriate design features.

Town Zoning Ordinance

Zoning within the Town is codified under [Title 18](#) of the Municipal Code and is visually synthesized in the Town's [Zoning Map](#). The Hawthorns Area is classified as Zoning District R-E/3.5A/SD-2/D-R under the Land Use Category "Community Park," described below:

- *R-E*: The "Residential Estate District" zone is intended to promote the establishment of a rural environment suitable for family living with parcels adequate to accommodate single family dwellings and accessory equestrian facilities. Parcel usage in the R-E district is subject to restrictions intended to preserve the Town's rural character, including limits placed on accessory uses; parcel area, open area, and bulk requirements; off-street parking requirements; provisions regulating nonconforming uses; required conditions; and special building setback lines. Furthermore, R-E districts are subject to net area reductions by the Town Planning Commission to reduce natural terrain and vegetation disturbances and ensure alignment with the General Plan.
- *3.5A*: This classification refers to the Hawthorns Area's categorization as a "Residential Density Combining District" associated with 3.5 acres. Limitations to areas with this classification include a maximum height of 34 feet, an 8,065 square feet maximum floor area, and a 15,566 square feet maximum for impervious surfaces.
- *SD-2*: This classification refers to the property's categorization as a "Slope Density Combining District" and determines acreage limitations for gross area per dwelling unit and required minimum parcel area.
- *D-R*: This distinction defines the Hawthorns Area as subject to "Design Review" regulations, which seek to preserve the existing natural quality of the area and provide for the adaptation of development to the natural scenery and specific site conditions; protect and enhance the visual character along designated major circulation corridors; and protect public and private property from excessive storm water runoff, soil erosion, earth movement, and fire hazard.

3.6.4 Infrastructure

In addition to the buildings associated with the Hawthorns Historic District, the Hawthorns Area contains infrastructure associated with previous and current land uses, including gates and fencing, a staff residence, utilities, and site security measures.

Gates and Fencing

The perimeter of the Hawthorns Area is fenced, with three primary gates for access— two along Los Trancos Road and one off Alpine Road. Additional interior fences and fence remnants (e.g., wood posts with barbed wire, board rails/slats, or metal stakes) are present throughout the property, primarily as vestiges of historic uses near the Historic Complex. These fences and fencing remnants vary in their condition, historical significance, impacts to wildlife, and implications for public safety. In 2022, the District enlisted Knapp Architects to conduct a site assessment of the fences, within the context of the site’s eligibility for listing as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places and prepare a memo describing general fence maintenance and site management principles for the District to follow in its ongoing management of the property.

Staff Residence

The District maintains a staff residence in the center of the Hawthorns Area, which is a building accessed via a paved driveway from Alpine Road. Built in 1952, this U-shaped California ranch residence sits on a small flat area at the end of the driveway and features a built-in garage, a front-facing balcony, and a low-pitched roof characteristic of western, pre-War California architecture. It is not historic in nature, nor is it associated with the Historic Complex.

Utilities

The staff residence located within the Hawthorns Area is served by electrical and water service, both of which are underground and parallel the driveway originating from Alpine Road. A septic system extends northeast of the residence, across the driveway.

The Hawthorns Historic Complex does not currently have permanent electric service, domestic water, storm drainage, sanitary sewer, or natural gas service. Water, gas, and electric meters and underground lines had been developed for a portion of the Historic Complex over the years, but as the site has been vacant for many years, these utilities have become outdated and are in disrepair. A historic, inactive water well is located near the Coachman’s quarters and pump house, although it is unclear when it was last used or where it connects. The Historic Complex has a septic system connected to the main house, garage, and cottage. There are sanitary waste lines that run south from the garage toward Los Trancos Creek and a septic tank located south of the garage. Other septic tanks may be present; however, none have been identified to date. Similarly, leach field locations have not been confirmed, but care will need to be taken to ensure leach fields are protected and avoided with further development. In addition, a sewer main runs through the site, south of the main house and garage, which may allow for sewer connections to buildings within the Historic Complex. There are several manhole covers present on the existing dirt roads and elsewhere in the Hawthorns Area, with a sewer line running parallel to Los Trancos Creek several feet out from its west bank. This sewer line is operated by the West Bay Sanitary District, which stipulates that all manholes must be kept clear at all times for emergency access.

Site Security

The buildings comprising the Historic Complex are locked, fenced, and boarded to prevent trespassing and vandalism. Standard signage denoting closed and hazardous areas, as well the year-round, on-site presence of a District Ranger at the staff residence, further augment site security.

4.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

This section identifies opportunities and constraints for the Hawthorns Area, which represent resource and land management priorities and key considerations that may have policy implications for the future use and management of the property. The topics described herein are a compilation of information gained through technical studies, coordination with District subject matter experts, and community engagement. The following opportunities and constraints have been organized by topic. Some features are addressed under multiple headings. For example, opportunities and constraints related to Los Trancos Creek are identified under natural resources, public access, and aesthetics. Each subsection begins with a brief overview of the opportunities and constraints for that topic area, followed by a summary table and a list of relevant public feedback received from the District’s public engagement programming. Some comments are verbatim, while others represent an amalgam of frequently expressed sentiments. The District will incorporate feedback as appropriate within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project.

Table 9: Executive Summary of Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
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O	By establishing resource and land management guidelines for the Hawthorns Area, the District has the opportunity to further its goals in protecting and restoring native habitat, supporting ecological resilience, wildlife connectivity, and wildland fire risk reduction.
O	An internal trail system at the Hawthorns Area will provide opportunities for low-intensity recreational uses, multimodal access, and potential local or regional trail connections.
O	Public access at the Hawthorns Area will allow the District to highlight scenic viewpoints and design low-intensity recreational amenities, while sharing the property's rich natural, cultural, and historic resources with the public through interpretative and educational features.
O	The Hawthorns Area Plan presents an opportunity for the District to partner with tribes, peer agencies, local municipalities, non-profits, and other entities to fulfill the property's vision and goals.
O	By developing maintenance and operation guidelines, the Hawthorns Area Plan can support the long-term stewardship of the property and meet public safety objectives in alignment with the District's Good Neighbor Policy.
O/C	The Hawthorns Area Plan presents opportunities for collaboration and support from stakeholders, including adjacent neighbors, local businesses, recreational interest groups, schools, and the broader Town of Portola Valley community. Concurrently, stakeholder concerns present considerations in how best to incorporate public access.
C	The conservation easement on the property limits the range of uses and management activities the District can consider for the Hawthorns Area.
C	The Hawthorns Area's limited size, steep topography, and sensitive ecological resources constrain the recreational amenities the District can develop.
C	The property's cultural and historical resources require careful management to ensure their long-term preservation, including limitations to public access.
C	Public access at the Hawthorns Area must take into consideration viewsheds in the region, including the Alpine Scenic Corridor.

4.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

Goal: Protect and restore native habitat and manage for ecological resiliency of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, wildlife connectivity, and other natural resources.

4.1.1 Plants

As discussed in Section 3.1.1, the Hawthorns Area contains three primary habitat types: Valley and Foothill Grassland, Cismontane Woodland, and Riparian Forest, which are known to support special-status plants in the region. Although no special-status plants have been observed at the Hawthorns Area, the Cismontane Woodland within the property contains one sensitive natural community, a cover of California bay trees, and a rare and threatened plant community, Valley Oak Woodland. Future management activities and public access infrastructure at the Hawthorns Area should consider the location and distribution of these sensitive and threatened natural communities.

Grasslands at the Hawthorns Area are typically comprised of introduced species of grasses and there is opportunity to manage the area to promote more native species composition. Sections of the property that were mowed as part of the District's fire management activities resulted in higher coverage of native species due to reduced competition from non-native species, suggesting that continued active management would benefit the native species. However, opening the Hawthorns Area to public access would increase the risk of introduction of invasive species by way of visitors unknowingly bringing in non-native seeds on shoes, vehicles, or clothing.

Woodlands at the Hawthorns Area have a concentration of state listed sensitive trees as well as those that have been affected by diseases such as sudden oak death. Management to prevent the spread of this pathogen will be necessary to reduce loss of native oak woodland habitat. The olive grove and hawthorn trees that were historically introduced to the area are non-native and have colonized parts of the landscape in which they were not originally planted. The olive grove is part of the Historic Complex and provides a food source for species such as the dusky footed woodrat, but the trees are considered a non-native species.

Table 10: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Plants

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Active grassland restoration and management would provide a suite of ecological benefits, including promotion of native species, wildland fire risk reduction, wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration.
O	The plant communities at the Hawthorns Area provide a range of habitat for a variety of native wildlife, including special status species.
C	Invasive species, such as French broom and yellow star-thistle, threaten native plant communities and increase fire risks.
C	Introduced species, such as the olive trees on the property, encroach on native tree species.
C	Opening the Hawthorns Area to public access increases the risk of introducing invasive species and plant pathogens by way of people unknowingly bringing in non-native seeds on shoes, vehicles, or clothing.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Plants

- Restore, protect, and actively manage native grasslands, including promotion of native species and protection from erosion.
- Grassland and woodland landscapes could provide opportunities for carbon sequestration.
- Grassland and woodland landscapes provide opportunities for wildlife habitat.
- The prevalence of invasive species, such as French broom and yellow star-thistle, presents a fire hazard.
- Introduced species, such as the olive trees on the property, encroach on native tree species. If the orchard is brought back into production, the fruit will need to be harvested to stop seeds from spreading via birds.
- The olive orchard is a noteworthy property feature and a draw for visitors.
- The olive orchard requires maintenance and management to reduce fallen branches and potential fire hazards.
- Planting oak trees can block views.
- Prevent intrusion of coyote brush.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.1.2 Wildlife

As discussed in Section 3.1.3, the Hawthorns Area supports a variety of native and special-status wildlife, including the Townsend’s big eared bat, dusky-footed woodrat, and steelhead trout. Townsend’s big eared bat, a California Species of Special Concern, has been detected in the upper barn, Hawthorns House, cottage, garage, and lower barn. It is presumed that these individuals were solitary males, as no maternity colonies were identified in any of the buildings. However, given the sparsely developed conditions in the surrounding area, it is possible that a Townsend’s big-eared bat maternity colony is present nearby, although none have been documented. Moreover, due to the presence of moderately dense woodland, understory cover and structure and the presence of a variety of food plants across the site, the Hawthorns Area supports a large woodrat population, with middens found in nearly every wooded area. Although most of the Hawthorns Area comprises highly suitable habitat for the San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat, wooded areas along the northwestern and eastern portions of the site support lower quality habitat primarily due to the sparse understory vegetation and structure. Additionally, Los Trancos Creek is designated critical habitat for steelhead trout. As increased human presence may negatively impact wildlife, care must be taken to minimize harm and ensure wildlife habitat is protected.

Existing fencing at the Hawthorns Area may restrict wildlife movement, but the District plans to include wildlife friendly fencing design principles into the planning process to allow for wildlife passage and improved habitat connectivity. In addition, site design at the Hawthorns Area is an opportunity to minimize habitat fragmentation by keeping habitat areas continuous and siting infrastructure such as trails and parking in such a way that habitat is not interrupted.

Table 11: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Wildlife

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	The Hawthorns Area supports a variety of native and special-status wildlife, including the Townsend’s big eared bat, dusky-footed woodrat, and steelhead trout.
O	The Hawthorns Area provides habitat connectivity and supports wildlife passage throughout the region, particularly through wildlife friendly fence designs.

C	Increased human presence from public access may negatively impact wildlife.
C	Historic fences may constraint wildlife movement.
C	San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat nests may constrain possible locations for public access trails, particularly in the Alpine Road Trail corridor.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Wildlife

- Maintain some portions of the property for wildlife use only; restrict recreational access in these areas.
- There is an opportunity for the Hawthorns Area to serve as a wildlife corridor.
- Less fencing would facilitate wildlife movement for mountain lion, deer, coyotes, and badgers.
- Replacing existing barbed wire fencing with something more wildlife friendly (e.g., split-rail, incontiguous fencing with gaps, etc.) would ensure wildlife passage and public safety/security, while maintaining alignment with the Town aesthetic standards for the scenic corridor.
- Look at current wildlife corridors and determine if fencing is blocking them and what can be done to facilitate access for wildlife.
- Consider providing wildlife crossings.
- Fencing may impede wildlife movement and connectivity.
- Potential for wildlife to become roadkill when crossing Alpine and Los Trancos Roads. Deer already get hit frequently near Echo Lane.
- Recently completed studies for the nearby Stanford Wedge project mentions San Francisco Garter Snake, which could be a public access constraint if present at the Hawthorns Area.
- The wild turkey population is already high and may outcompete native species.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.1.3 Aquatic Resources

Los Trancos Creek provides an important ecological function as a riparian corridor and critical habitat for steelhead trout. District staff have determined that the creek within the Hawthorns Area is in good condition without apparent immediate need for restoration, and the District does not have planned restoration projects for this segment. Portions of Los Trancos Creek within the Hawthorns Area could be enhanced in the future to improve its habitat potential, visual character, and educational and interpretive value while still performing its required hydrologic function. Future riparian habitat improvements could include debris cleanup in upland areas, fence removal and invasive plant species management, and the riparian zone could be expanded in some areas along the west bank.

Recreational use near Los Trancos Creek could introduce disturbances such as trash, erosion, and sedimentation. Furthermore, Los Trancos Creek is a tributary to San Francisquito Creek, which is a designated 303(d) impaired waterbody due to trash and sedimentation. Even if trails or parking do not lead directly to Los Trancos Creek, the creek channel would be an attractive feature if visible from public trails or parking areas. Inviting public access – either authorized or unauthorized – near Los Trancos Creek could interfere with recovery goals for San Francisquito Creek. Creating public parking area near Los Trancos Creek could require new stormwater and drainage control infrastructure to minimize impacts to riparian resources. This infrastructure may be cost-prohibitive and inconsistent with the District’s mission to provide ecologically sensitive public access with minimal site disturbance.

Table 12: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Aquatic Resources

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Los Trancos Creek provides an important ecological function as a riparian corridor and critical habitat for steelhead trout.
O	Portions of Los Trancos Creek within the Hawthorns Area could be enhanced to improve its habitat potential, visual character, and educational and interpretive value while still performing its required hydrologic function.
O	The Hawthorns Area provides sufficient space for adequate setbacks and buffers to protect waterways and riparian resources.

C	Recreational use near Los Trancos Creek could introduce disturbances such as trash, erosion, and sedimentation.
C	Public access near Los Trancos Creek could interfere with recovery goals for San Francisquito Creek.
C	Siting public parking near Los Trancos Creek is to be avoided to maintain consistency with the District's mission of providing ecologically sensitive public access with minimal impacts to natural resources.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Aquatic Resources

- There is an opportunity to confirm that Los Trancos creek supports fish populations.
- Creek setbacks should be large to protect riparian areas.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District's resource management policies.

4.2 PUBLIC ACCESS

Goal: Open the Hawthorns Area to low-intensity public access, provide an internal trail system, and provide multimodal access to the property.

4.2.1 Parking Area and Driveway Access

The District will consider designated parking within the Hawthorns Area to facilitate public access and provide other amenities, including signboards, restrooms, and other low-intensity facilities to accommodate recreational uses and multimodal access. The District must consider many factors when evaluating the size and location for future parking, including sensitive ecologic and historic resources, anticipated visitor demand, potential for overflow parking on adjacent roads, multimodal accessibility, roadway circulation, traffic safety, the Alpine Road Scenic Corridor, the guidelines of the conservation easement, and surrounding land uses. Hilly terrain within the Hawthorns Area will also limit the suitability of parking locations because developing a flat parking surface within an open space context should not entail major landform alterations that disturb existing hydrology or topography and potentially result in aesthetic/visual impacts.

A future parking area at the Hawthorns Area will require a driveway connecting to adjacent roadways. The existing access points identified in **Figure 4** and described below could be evaluated as potential driveways to a future parking area within the Hawthorns Area. A new driveway may also be considered depending on the location of parking and the lines of sight available on adjacent roads.

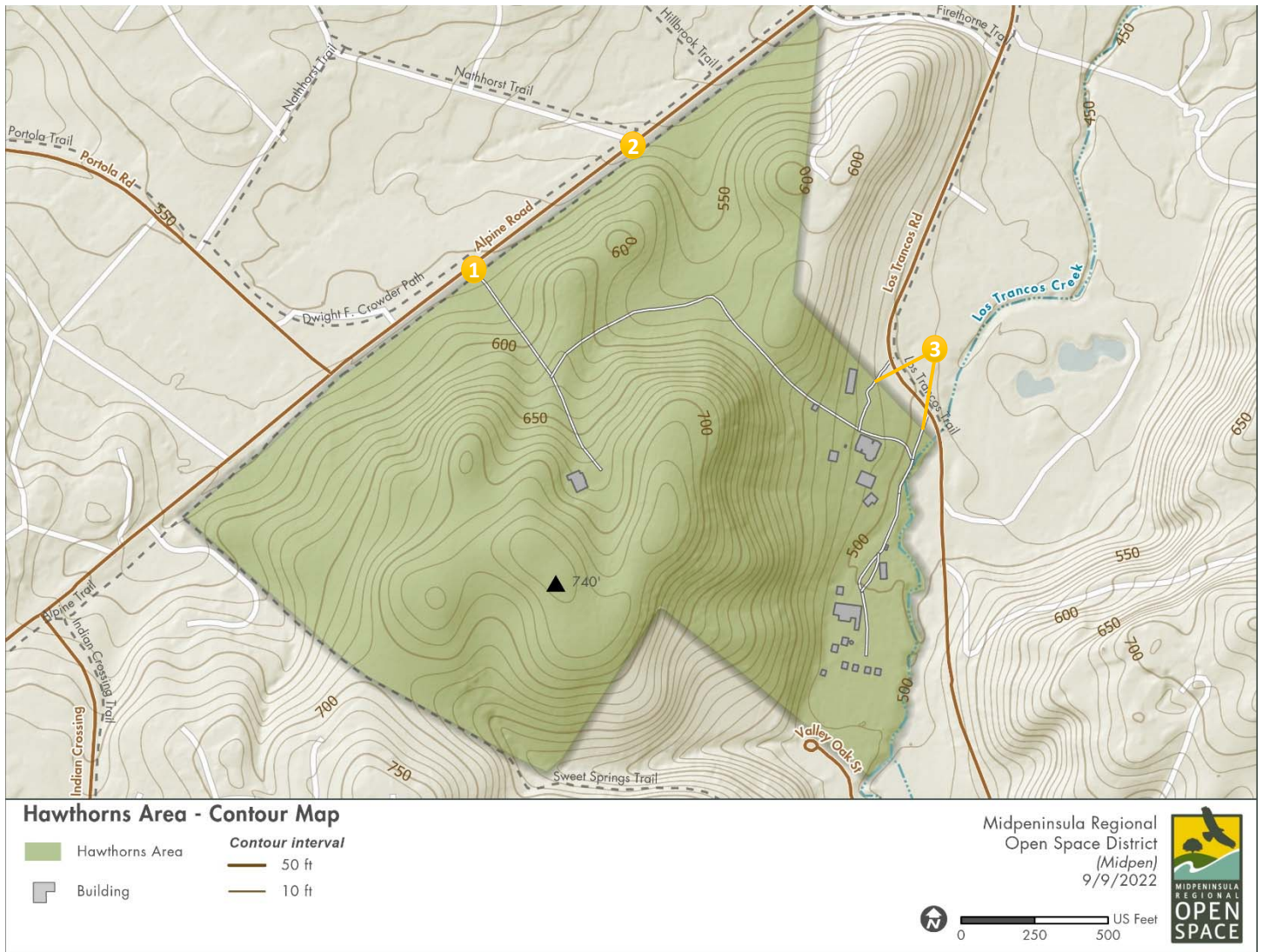


Figure 4: Map of Existing Access Points

1. 4411 Alpine Road Driveway

The paved driveway at 4411 Alpine Road currently provides access to the District residence located in the center of the property and could provide driveway access to future parking. This existing driveway intersects perpendicularly with a straight segment of Alpine Road and crosses Alpine Trail, which could result in potential conflicts between trail users and visitors accessing the driveway. This potential conflict could be reduced by realigning Alpine Trail further into the Preserve. The line of sight and impacts to the Town’s traffic corridor are being evaluated as part of the District’s transportation study.

2. Alpine Road Historic Driveway Entrance

The original entrance road to the Hawthorns property entered from Alpine Road about 500 yards east of the current driveway to the residence at 4411 Alpine Road. Although this original driveway is overgrown with vegetation and its roadbed is no longer extant, it represents an existing access point into a relatively flat portion of the Hawthorns Area. This entrance would be subject to the same constraints described above for the 4411 Alpine Road driveway.

3. Los Trancos Driveways

Two existing driveways extend into the Hawthorns Area from Los Trancos Road, a two-lane 35 mph roadway located along the eastern boundary of the property. This segment of Los Trancos Road is located at the center of an ‘S’ curve in the roadway. Accordingly, both driveways appear to have limited lines of sight, which may represent a safety concern for access to the Hawthorns Area and are undergoing further evaluation.

Moreover, parking infrastructure near Los Trancos Creek could result in environmental degradation, such as increased stormwater runoff and pollutants, and could require new infrastructure to minimize impacts to riparian resources. However, extensive

stormwater and drainage control infrastructure would be inconsistent with the District’s mission to provide ecologically sensitive public access with minimal site disturbance. Furthermore, large improvements (grading, retention walls, extended driveway, etc.) would also be inconsistent with the conservation easement maintained by POST, which directs preservation of the Hawthorns Area’s natural, scenic, historic, and open space conservation values.

Additionally, both driveways provide direct access to the Historic Complex, which introduces a number of complexities. At this time, the future of the Historic Complex has yet to be determined. In their current state, the structures comprising the Historic Complex are in poor condition, presenting potential safety and aesthetic concerns. Public access to this portion of the property would require increased scope, schedule, budget, permitting, stakeholder and public engagement, as well as peer agency coordination to perform the necessary site improvements and avoid potential impacts to historic and pre-historic resources.

The District may seek to identify potential partners to use and maintain the Historic Complex. A shared driveway to a public parking area and private use at the Historic Complex would require greater oversight and coordination in the management of public access and create shared maintenance and repair responsibilities.

Table 13: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Parking Areas and Driveways

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	The District has the opportunity to provide on-site parking in certain locations, which warrant further study to assess feasibility for public access.
O	Pending further study, a driveway originating at Alpine Road may provide access to the Hawthorns Area.
O/C	The property’s existing driveways present an opportunity to achieve the project’s public access goals efficiently and cost-effectively without increasing the footprint of disturbed areas. However, line of sight constraints may render some access points infeasible.
C	Topography limits the potential locations and size of future on-site parking.
C	Sensitive resources constrain the possible locations for future on-site parking.
C	Line of sight constraints for Los Trancos Road inhibit public access.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Parking Areas and Driveway Access

The District received a high volume of public comments on the topic of parking. Many commenters proposed a large parking area to accommodate all visitors on-site and prevent overflow into neighborhoods, while some commenters requested limited parking to encourage visitation to Hawthorns Area via regional trails.

- Provide ample parking onsite to prevent overflow into neighborhoods.
- Develop multiple parking sites to increase availability.
- Limit parking on-site to keep overall usage low.
- Build parking area at existing flat area near eastern side of the Preserve at Los Trancos Road.
- Site parking closer to top of the hill or within interior of Preserve where it would be less visible from roadways.
- Provide separate entrances and exits to control the flow of traffic and fire safety/emergency access.
- Use lessons learned from Windy Hill and Arastradero parking areas.
- Limit overcrowding with a permit parking system, a reservation system, and/or an ADA only parking area.
- Driveway access from Alpine Road would be central to Town.
- Ensure safety of parking lots for kids – lines of sight, turn lanes, etc.
- Consider a natural surface driveway and parking lot instead of asphalt.
- Parking locations are limited by steep slopes.
- There is concern over the potential unavailability of parking with increased population in the area, especially on the weekends.
- There is concern over overflow of parking into neighborhoods, roadways, and businesses, specifically:
 - Portola Valley Ranch
 - Valley Oak Street
 - Alpine Road
 - Portola Road
 - Oak Forest Court

- Willowbrook Drive
- Robert’s Market and the surrounding commercial complex
- Corte Madera School
- Parking on roads would cause safety issues for cyclists due to encroachment into bike lanes.
- There is concern that opening the Hawthorns Area will result in overflow parking for Windy Hill.
- Consider providing overflow lots for the Hawthorns Area. Coordinate with Corte Madera School and other entities for potential overflow parking areas, particularly at weekends.
- There is concern about people parking at the end of the road and trail junctions to use trails.
- Parking lots would invite in more people – trails should be more of a throughway.
- Creating an internal loop trail with no connection to the Town’s trail system would potentially lower demand for this preserve.
- Road cyclists may use the lot to park and ride for a whole day.
- Streets in Portola Valley Ranch are narrow, and neighbors are concerned that their driveways will be blocked.
- There is concern about car density and safety within any on-site parking area.
- Using Alpine Road driveway could cause safety issues for kids using Alpine Trail.
- Los Trancos Road is windy with blind curves and people typically exceed the speed limit, posing safety concerns for recreational users.
- Parking on Los Trancos Road (near the Historic Complex) could negatively affect homes in the surrounding area, specifically due to increases in noise and visual impacts.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.2.2 Recreational Uses

The District’s mission emphasizes low-intensity recreational uses to avoid concentration of use, significant alteration of the land, and natural resource impacts. The level of access for low-intensity public recreational use of District land is evaluated against the following basic criteria:

- Protection of natural resources;
- Preservation of the opportunity for tranquil nature study and observation;
- Avoidance of significant visitor and trail user conflicts;
- Availability of Board and staff time, funding, and/or other means, to plan for and manage the use.

Access for hiking is typically unrestricted on District trails and lands. Public comments also suggested other opportunities for enjoyment at the Hawthorns Area, including nature photography, picnicking, meditation, and educational components. The District will consider other recreational uses of the Hawthorns Area including equestrians, dogs on-leash, and bicycles, as described below. Factors to consider include use conflicts, consistency with adjacent local trail and property uses, and maintenance feasibility.

Equestrians

There is high public interest in equestrian accessibility in the Hawthorns Area and most local trails are currently accessible to equestrians. The provision of equestrian amenities such as hitching posts and water troughs would make trails more accessible and enjoyable for equestrians. Due to size limitations that the District is likely to encounter for parking, providing equestrian parking may be very difficult to accommodate at the Hawthorns Area. Providing equestrian friendly parking requires much more planning than typical car parking lots based on the amount of space needed for the trailers (equaling the width of five or six regular car spaces) and turnaround considerations. By including equestrian trail uses, considerations will be needed for overhead clearance, trail width, trail grade, trail surfacing, and line of sight.

Table 14: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Equestrian Use

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
○	Equestrian access to the Hawthorns Area may enhance the regional equestrian trail network.
○	Equestrian amenities, such as hitching posts and water troughs, would make trails more accessible and enjoyable for equestrians.

C	Equestrian parking may be very difficult to accommodate at the Hawthorns Area due to size and site constraints and would require additional planning, potentially impacting project schedule, scope, and budget.
C	By including equestrian trail uses, considerations will be needed for overhead clearance, trail width, trail grade, trail surfacing, and line of sight.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Equestrian Use

Equestrian stakeholder representatives discussed their priority desires for the Hawthorns Area in the following order of interest:

- Equestrian access and amenities, such as hitching posts, at the Hawthorns Area would be ideal for regional equestrian trail users.
- Providing supportive amenities like hitching posts.
- Equestrian parking would be welcome.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

Additional public input pertaining to equestrian use included the following:

- Consider the height of overstory on trails to improve access.
- Consider sight lines – do not want hedges, fence lines, or other things blocking vision and prefer gradual bends to the trail, so people and horses can see well into the distance and avoid potential user conflicts, especially with cyclists.
- Provide loop trails through the property.
- Provide safe fencing (no barbed wire) placed three or more feet from the trail.
- Keep speeds low for all users so that everyone can enjoy the property.
- Utilize horses for grazing in organized community grazing days.
- Expose hikers and other non-horse people to large animals.
- Barbed wire on some existing trails (Sweet Springs Trail) presents a hazard to horses.
- Safety conflicts between equestrians and cyclists could be problematic.
- Impacts of equine presence and waste on the natural environment must be considered.
- Consider not allowing equestrians at the Hawthorns Area, as it is small and there are other local and regional locations for equestrian use.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

Dogs

Dogs are allowed on specific trails within District lands and are subject to the District’s dog policies.¹⁵ These policies include requiring leashes, limits on number of dogs per person, and restriction of dogs in prohibited areas. If dogs are allowed into the Hawthorns Area, all rules listed in the regulations and ordinances would apply. Many trails adjacent to the Hawthorns Area, including Alpine Trail and Los Trancos Trail, as well as designated trails in Windy Hill Open Space Preserve allow dogs on-leash, but trails within the Portola Valley Ranch community do not allow dogs on-leash.

Table 15: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Dog Use

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Dog access at the Hawthorns Area would align with permissible uses near and adjacent to the Hawthorns Area, providing local and regional recreational opportunities for dog owners.
C	Dog access requires additional patrol/enforcement to ensure compliance with regulations, including on-leash mandates and proper dog waste disposal.
C	Dog access necessitates additional trail signage and infrastructure, potentially impacting visual resources.

¹⁵ The District Dog Policy is outlined in section 701.1 of District Regulations and Ordinances.

C	Dog access may conflict with other trail uses, such as equestrian access.
C	Dog access may have a negative impact on wildlife.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Dog Use

- There is high public interest for on-leash dog walking.
- Provide clear on-trail signage for designated trails that allow dogs.
- Dogs are not allowed on some neighborhood trails or nearby preserves. Allowing dogs at the Hawthorns Area could result in improper use elsewhere.
- Impacts of dog presence and waste on the natural environment could be detrimental. Provide dog waste containers.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

Bicycles

Bicycling is a very popular activity in the vicinity of the Hawthorns Area, particularly along Alpine and Portola Roads. Bicycles are allowed in several regional parks and open spaces, including Windy Hill Preserve. However, some local trails that could serve as regional and local connections, such as Sweet Springs and Los Trancos Trails, do not allow bikes. Although the District does not typically allow bicycles on small preserves, there is public interest in opening all or portions of the Hawthorns Area to bicycles.

Table 16: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Bicycle Use

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Bicycle use at the Hawthorns Area presents an opportunity to enhance the network of local and regional bicycle trails, augmenting recreational opportunities in the area.
O	Bicycle infrastructure, including racks, can encourage multimodal access throughout the region.
C	Bicycle access at the Hawthorns Area may result in conflicts between trail users.
C	Bicycle access at the Hawthorns Area may result in improper bicycle usage on adjacent trails where bicycles are not permitted, potentially increasing trail conflicts regionally and/or necessitating additional patrol and enforcement.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Bicycle Use

- Provide opportunities for regional trail routes for bicyclists.
- Provide mountain bicycle access within the Hawthorns Area.
- Cycling to and through the Preserve is a good form of multimodal access.
- Expand Alpine Trail for additional bicycle use and safety.
- Consider safe, kid-friendly bicycle routes, such as allowing bicycle use for kids on Alpine Trail during school hours even if trails in the whole Preserve are not open to bicycles.
- Some trails in the Portola Valley Ranch are closed to bicycles and trail designations in the Hawthorns area would need to be consistent with these uses.
- Conflicts between equestrians and bicyclists may arise. Equestrians cite safety concerns and cyclists cite historical disputes with equestrians not wanting bikes on trails.
- Consider providing a flow trail, jump trail, and/or a pump track for bicyclists.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.2.3 Internal Trail System

The District intends to provide an internal trail system within the Hawthorns Area to facilitate low-intensity, ecologically-sensitive recreational uses. This may include a loop trail system contained within the Preserve, one or more designated entrance location(s), a

driveway for automobile access, on-site parking, sited trailheads, and possible interconnections with adjacent trails (refer to Section 4.3).

The design and location of trails within the Hawthorns Area will depend on a number of factors. The Hawthorns Area is characterized by steep and hilly terrain, which makes it topographically complex. The presence of sensitive resources, such as riparian areas and ecosystems that support special-status species, will determine constraints into the siting of trails. Because the Hawthorns Area is centrally located within the Town, the District must consider visibility of and from nearby residences and roadways in the design and location of the trails to preserve privacy and limit impacts to viewsheds. Moreover, visitation at the Hawthorns Area may vary based on the trails provided, as an internal loop system may not attract as many users as a trail network integrated with local and regional trails. The District will evaluate each of the described factors in the design and siting process.

Easy Access Trails

New public access projects provide opportunities to accommodate users at different ability or accessibility levels, including people who use wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, and anyone desiring a less strenuous open space experience. The District may consider designating a future trail within the Hawthorns Area as an Easy Access Trail, which provides specific design standards regarding trail width, grade, cross-slopes and surface.

Table 17: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Internal Trails

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Public access at the Hawthorns Area presents an opportunity to provide a network of recreational trails for visitors, supporting the District’s mission and fulfilling the vision and goals for the Hawthorns Area.
O	If feasible given the topography and other site constraints, new trails at the Hawthorns Area may provide opportunities to accommodate users of all abilities and accessibility levels through Easy Access Trails.
O/C	The relocation of the Alpine Trail presents an opportunity to provide safer passage throughout the Town, particularly for school children. At the same time, the relocation of the Alpine Trail may be constrained by the physical characteristics of the site.
C	The network of internal trails will be limited in scope, length, grade, and placement due to the site’s size and topographic constraints.
C	The network of internal trails may be limited in scope, length, grade, and placement so as not to interfere with the District’s ecological, historic, and cultural resource management goals.
C	Trail siting may be constrained by additional factors, including feasible access points to the site, possible on-site parking, adjacent trail connections, and traffic/congestion considerations.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Internal Trails

- Hiking opportunities are highly desired at the Hawthorns Area.
- Utilize switchbacks to gradually overcome hilly terrain.
- Provide Preserve amenities, including restrooms, picnic tables, and benches.
- Provide benches for people to stop and relax.
- Ensure relatively flat and stable trail surfaces where possible.
- Develop a trail experience that could accommodate users with limited mobility.
- Site trails on the periphery of the Preserve to avoid impacts to grasslands.
- Mountain bikes can create user conflicts, particularly between equestrians, hikers, bird watchers, and dog walkers.
- Picnic tables could encourage more time spent at the property, which could exacerbate parking challenges.
- The small size of the Preserve limits trail length.
- Connect to the Town’s trail system.
- Do not connect to the Town’s trail system.
- Provide multi-use trails, especially along and near Alpine Road.
- Provide bicycle only trails.
- Trail building destroys wildlife habitat and contributes to erosion. Please create sustainable trails.
- Do not build any new trails.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.2.4 Multimodal Access

The District aims to reduce dependence on private vehicles to expand accessibility, limit parking congestion, and introduce greener modes of transit. Because of the central location of the Hawthorns Area and adjacency of existing trail systems, it is an ideal location for many residents to visit on foot, on bike, or on horseback. Other potential modes of transit could include shuttles or ride sharing/ride hailing services. The Town is currently serviced by recently reduced public transit service on weekdays only (school oriented [SamTrans Route 87](#)), so any kind of shuttle program would need to be external and likely involve coordination with the Town. An additional possible constraint of encouraging multimodal access could be unauthorized uses on local trails, such as bicycles on non-bike designated trails in an attempt to reach the Preserve.

Table 18: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Multimodal Access

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Public access at the Hawthorns Area may support local and regional multimodal access efforts.
C	Current multimodal access is limited and would require additional infrastructure and amenities, as well as a concerted coordination effort between the District and the Town.
C	Multimodal access would require ongoing enforcement and education to ensure compliance with trail use rules, especially in areas where bikes are not allowed.
C	Due to its limited size, the Hawthorns Area alone may not encourage a large modal shift in regional transportation. However, the Hawthorns Area may be included in a broader multimodal access effort for the region.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Multimodal Access

- Allow walking access to the Hawthorns Area. Many walking paths are connected in the Town, which would allow residents to visit without driving.
- Providing a shuttle service would allow for access without taxing town infrastructure.
- Provide bike racks/parking at trailheads and parking areas.
- Limited transit service is availability in the Town, which may complicate multimodal access opportunities.
- There are concerns about increased recreational traffic near the Hawthorns Area.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.2.5 Interpretation, Environmental Education, and Public Engagement

Goal: Interpret the rich natural, cultural, and historic features and pursue partnerships to manage the property’s natural and cultural history.

The Hawthorns Area presents an opportunity to provide interpretive elements, including docent-led tours, interpretive panels, and signage, pertaining to the history and natural features of the site. The public and stakeholders have voiced support for interpretive elements and education at the Hawthorns Area.

Table 19: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Interpretation, Environmental Education, and Public Engagement

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Interpretation, environmental education, docent programming, and public engagement provide opportunities to inform and connect the public to the property’s historic and cultural significance.
O	Interpretative elements present opportunities for partnerships between the District, the Town, tribes, and others.
C	Interpretive elements may increase visitation and traffic at the site.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Interpretation, Environmental Education, and Public Engagement

- Provide youth programming, such as nature, science, history education, demonstrative agriculture, 4-H, and land-based skill building activities.
- Consider partnerships to provide interpretation and environmental education, such as with the University of California Cooperative Extension program or the County of San Mateo.
- Create an interpretive nature center.
- The Hawthorns Area may enhance the Town’s cultural offerings.
- Engage with Town committees including Nature and Science Committee, Conservation Committee, and Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Traffic Safety Committee.
- Allow docent-led hikes and tours of the property before the official opening to allow more public access.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to help manage the olive grove.
- Increased crowding and traffic may occur if educational and/or docent programming becomes too extensive.
- There are concerns about the site becoming a similar level of attraction to other regional educational destinations.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.3 LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Goal: Connect to adjacent public trails and explore opportunities for trail connections to regional open space lands.

The Hawthorns Area may provide an important connection with the local trail network. New trails within the Hawthorns Area could bring visitors to and through the property, and a District/Town partnership to realign and widen Alpine Trail would increase the safety along this existing trail corridor. Through partnerships and acquisition opportunities, the Hawthorns Area may also support regional connections between nearby public lands including Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, Foothills Nature Preserve, and Windy Hill Open Space Preserve.

Allowable uses for future trails in the Hawthorns Area should consider current uses on existing local trails (see **Table**) to minimize the potential for unauthorized use or the need for increased enforcement. In particular, additional usage of the Sweet Springs Trail could raise privacy, safety, trail maintenance, rule enforcement, and security concerns for Portola Valley Ranch residents.

Table 20: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Local and Regional Connectivity

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	The Hawthorns Area may connect to adjacent trails, enhancing the local trail network.
O	The potential widening and realignment of the Alpine Trail may reduce trail user conflicts and address safety concerns, particularly for school children.
C	The network of private land surrounding the Hawthorns Area inhibits regional trail connectivity, as access rights would need to be acquired to close existing gaps.
C	Additional trails at the Hawthorns Area could raise privacy, safety, trail maintenance, rule enforcement, and security concerns for adjacent neighbors.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Local and Regional Connectivity

- There is support for trails located on the periphery of the Hawthorns Area to connect with other Town trails and integrate with the Portola Valley Trail Plan.
- There is concern that regional connectivity could also drive up visitation whereas a closed loop system within the Preserve might not.
- Realign portions of Alpine Trail adjacent to the Hawthorns Area to improve safety and trail experience.
- Walk-in access from Alpine Road would benefit the community.
- Emphasize local connections over regional destinations.
- Evaluate connections with adjacent trails, including Sweet Springs Trail, Los Trancos Trail, Alpine Trail, and Valley Oak Trail.
- Provide safe walking and running trail on eastern side of the property for safety of walkers and runners that currently must use Los Trancos Road.

- Support regional trail connections to Windy Hill, Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, Foothills Nature Preserve, and Coal Mine Ridge.
- Connect to local origins and destinations like Woodside Priory, Corte Madera School, the Sequoias Retirement Community.
- Obtain easements on private roads and land to provide new regional trail connections.
- Provide clear signage to describe uses allowable on connected trails (i.e., no dogs, no bikes, etc.)
- Connections between the Hawthorns Area and existing trails could encourage unauthorized parking on nearby roads.
- Incompatible uses on adjacent trails may create enforcement issues.
- There are concerns about increased recreational traffic on existing adjacent trails, which could create maintenance issues and user conflicts.
- Alpine Road is currently used for school access for kids and there are concerns about impeding access.
- The Hawthorns Area is small and may have limited recreational carrying capacity.
- Increased automobile or recreational traffic on Los Trancos Road or Los Trancos Trail could increase safety hazards.
- Some members in the Portola Valley Ranch community are opposed to additional use of Sweet Springs Trail and Deer Path, as they are narrow and wind among private homes and pose safety and privacy concerns.
- Sweet Springs Trail is known to be very steep as it follows the fence line bordering the Hawthorns Area.
- The Hawthorns Area presents opportunities to extend trails from the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood, creating regional trails that would allow public access across the Hawthorns Area into the Town.
- The Historic Complex could inhibit connection through Los Trancos Creek Trail.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District's resource management policies.

4.4 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal: Interpret the rich natural, cultural, and historic features and pursue partnerships to manage the property's natural and cultural history.

4.4.1 Hawthorns Historic District

The entire 79-acre Hawthorns Area is eligible for listing as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and is listed in the Town's General Plan Historic Element. Many features within the Hawthorns Area contribute to the property's historic significance, including the buildings centralized in the Historic Complex, the olive grove, and other built and landscape elements identified in **Table** . Physical changes to the Hawthorns Area would be subject to local, state, and federal policies that regulate activities within designated historic areas.

The Hawthorns Area has a rich history and could facilitate interpretive experiences that provide the public with opportunities to enjoy the Hawthorns Area's natural beauty and discover stories about successive eras of California history. Opportunities for interpretation, environmental education, and public engagement at the Hawthorns Area include the following:

- Trailhead Orientation & Self-Guided Interpretation: trailhead signage and self-guided interpretation could inform visitors of the property's natural and cultural history.
- Collaboration with local schools: The Hawthorns Area is located within proximity to several schools and could provide an opportunity for hands-on learning.
- Collaboration with the Town: The Hawthorns Area is an important resource to Town residents. Partnership with Town officials and community groups could yield environmental education and public engagement opportunities at the Hawthorns Area.

4.4.2 Hawthorns Historic Complex

Structures within the Hawthorns Historic Complex are in various states of disrepair that currently prevents safe public access. The District is conducting a separate Hawthorns Historic Complex Structural Assessment Project to identify a range of feasible options for stabilization, repair, reuse and/or removal of structures within the Hawthorns Historic Complex as well as cost estimates that would be presented to the District's Board of Directors for review.

Long-Term Uses and Disposition of the Hawthorns Historic Complex Structures

Any future plans regarding the availability or restriction of public access within the Historic Complex will be evaluated as part of a future public access planning process, and public access to the Hawthorns Historic Complex will be dependent on the evaluation and disposition of the structures and long-term plans for the Historic Complex.

4.4.3 Historic and Cultural Resources

The Hawthorns Area contains sensitive Native American resources, generally located along the Los Trancos Creek corridor. Public access to the Hawthorns Area could increase risk of degradation or damage to these resources. Interpretive elements pertaining to Native American use of the site and the region provide an opportunity to both protect these resources and educate the public about the original inhabitants of the site. The District will seek partnerships and consultation with tribal representatives when pursuing these opportunities.

Table 21: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Historic and Cultural Resources

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Interpretive and educational elements pertaining to historic and cultural use of the site and the region provide an opportunity to protect these resources and educate the public about the original inhabitants of the area.
O	The District has the opportunity to seek partnerships and consultation with tribal representatives.
C	Public access to the Hawthorns Area could increase risk of degradation, damage, and/or removal of sensitive cultural resources.
C	Structures within the Hawthorns Historic Complex are in various states of disrepair and currently prevent safe public access.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Historic and Cultural Resources

- Allow public access to the Historic Complex.
- Utilize the Hawthorns House in some capacity, as it has high architectural and historic value. Suggestions include a residence, worker housing, museum, educational facility, interpretive center, event venue, meeting center, hostel, or community equestrian center.
- Include interpretive elements, such as murals, docent-led tours, youth programming, and historical exhibits.
- Leverage community fundraising and involvement for preservation and restoration of structures.
- Preserve the rural nature of the Town.
- Conduct demonstrative agriculture in the olive orchard.
- Involve Native American community members in planning for use of the Hawthorns Area.
- The Historic Complex is in poor condition and the buildings detract from the desired aesthetic.
- Restoration and reuse of the Historic Complex will incur expenses that should be allocated to protect more open space.
- Olive trees are not native to California and may be a fire hazard. Focus instead on native species.
- Buildings could attract unauthorized use and vandalism.
- The Historic Complex poses a fire hazard, and the buildings should be removed for public safety.
- Consider soliciting investor interests to restore the Hawthorns House.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District's resource management policies.

4.5 AESTHETICS

Goal: Highlight scenic viewpoints and design recreational amenities while protecting scenic viewsheds.

The Hawthorns Area offers panoramic views, scenic landscapes, and historic features that could be featured destinations for recreationalists and visitors. In particular, grassland hilltops, the olive grove, the Historic Complex, and the Los Trancos Creek channel contribute to the Preserve's unique scenic character and convey the property's rich history.

There are a number of visual characteristics in the property vicinity that detract from scenic quality and character. The proximity of existing development and roadways surrounding the Hawthorns Area interrupts otherwise expansive views of the Santa Cruz mountains and foothills. Viewpoints from the Hawthorns Area may have visibility of homes and yards of private properties adjacent to the property, which could create the potential for privacy concerns for existing homeowners. Conversely, recreational infrastructure within the Hawthorns Area, such as trails on grasslands and parking areas, could potentially be visible from nearby neighborhoods and could bring recreationalists and visitors into private viewsheds.

The Hawthorns Area is located within Alpine Road Scenic Corridor and is subject to guidelines that protect the natural beauty of this corridor. In addition, Section 18.58.020(D) of the Town’s Code of Ordinances establishes a 75-foot setback from the Alpine Road right-of-way. Together, these policies may limit locations for public access infrastructure around the Hawthorns Area site perimeter.

Table 22: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Aesthetics

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	Panoramic views, scenic landscapes, grassland hilltops, the olive grove, and the Historic Complex are unique scenic characteristics of the Preserve that could be attractive elements for visitors.
C	Visibility of private property adjacent to the Hawthorns Area could create the potential for privacy concerns for existing landowners and impact private viewsheds.
C	As the Hawthorns Area is located within the Alpine Road Scenic Corridor, it is subject to guidelines that may limit locations for public access infrastructure around the Hawthorns Area site perimeter.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Aesthetics

- Provide views of surrounding areas from hiking trails and amenities like benches and picnic tables.
- The open space, views, and scenic beauty of the Hawthorns Area are a huge asset to the community.
- Protect the pristine viewshed from Alpine Road and adjacent properties.
- The visibility of a parking lot from Alpine Road would detract from the property’s scenic value.
- Grassland trails have high visibility from surrounding vantage points.
- The visibility of trails and infrastructure on top of the hills would diminish property values for landowners with current views of the hilltop.
- The Historic Complex buildings are an eyesore and detract from the desired aesthetic.
- Remove the chain-link fence on Alpine Road and the barbed wire fence along the Sweet Springs Trail. Both are unsightly and the barbed wire is dangerous.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District’s resource management policies.

4.6 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Goal: Manage the property for safe public access in a fiscally sustainable manner that promotes ongoing public support and appreciation with ongoing public engagement and consistent with the District’s Good Neighbor Policy.

The Hawthorns Area presents several management considerations in moving forward with planning. Due to its location in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and the presence of non-native flammable plants, such as French broom, and native, but overrepresented coyote brush, the Hawthorns Area requires management to maintain wildland fire resiliency. The use of conservation grazing and timed mowing can provide the opportunity to control invasive plants and control fire danger. Opening the Hawthorns Area to the public will require increased staffing to provide patrol, enforce rules, and maintain safe trails. The Town has planned several other projects within the Alpine Road corridor including housing projects. The cumulative impact of increased traffic during construction and opening activities at the Hawthorns Area is a potential concern.

Table 23: Opportunities and Constraints Pertaining to Operations and Maintenance

Opportunities/Constraints	Topic Area
O	The use of conservation grazing and timed mowing can provide the opportunity to control invasive plants and control fire danger.
C	The location of the Hawthorns Area in the WUI and the presence of flammable invasive species necessitate management to maintain wildland fire resiliency.
C	Opening the Hawthorns Area to the public will require increased staffing to provide patrol, enforce rules, and maintain safe trails.
C	The cumulative impact of increased traffic during construction, opening activities, and ongoing recreation at the Hawthorns Area is a potential concern.

Recurring Public and Stakeholder Input Pertaining to Operations and Maintenance

- Involve the community in maintenance efforts to increase feelings of involvement and engagement.
- The Hawthorns Area presents a fire risk to the surrounding neighborhoods, including the Portola Valley Ranch. Control fire danger in community with community involvement and use of grazing.
- Reduce ladder fuels in the olive orchard, along the creek, and around the Historic Complex.
- Reduce risk of fire and evacuation issues by closing the Hawthorns Area during times of high fire danger.
- Consider providing water storage or fire hydrants to facilitate wildland fire response.
- There is concern of vandalism at the Hawthorns Area, particularly in the Historic Complex area.
- It may be difficult to enforce rules, such as no bikes or no dogs off leash.
- Increased use and potential trash accumulation on trails would require more maintenance.
- Emergency access could be a challenge.
- Poison oak poses a hazard to the public.

Note: The District will incorporate input as appropriate and/or feasible within the scope of the Hawthorns Area Plan project, the Board-approved Vision and Goals, and the District's resource management policies.

5.0 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The District conducted a series of public, neighborhood, and stakeholder meetings in addition to hosting site tours and administering public surveys to solicit feedback on the project. The recurring themes described above stem from this engagement effort and reflect actual comments made. Overall, public input exhibited excitement and support for public access and open space preservation, which was noted to be consistent with the Town's values and General Plan. There were many different viewpoints and priorities gathered from the public, so a balanced approach will be necessary to accommodate multiple user groups and perspectives. A holistic view of all regional activities and needs is desirable, considering other development within the Town and region. Based on the volume and frequency of comments received across all existing conditions categories, the following opportunities and constraints were of the most importance to the community:

Opportunities

- Regional trail connections
- Many options for multimodal access due to proximity to Town
- Educational and interpretive elements
- Many recreational opportunities

Constraints

- Availability of parking and overflow into neighborhoods
- User conflict on trails
- Small size of the Preserve
- Increased traffic impacts

5.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS

Throughout the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Phase of the Hawthorns Area Plan planning process, the District engaged various stakeholders, including the Town of Portola Valley, advocacy organizations, neighborhood groups, local businesses, and members of the public, in a series of discussions to receive input on the opportunities and constraints the public envisions at the Hawthorns Area. These stakeholder groups included:

- Equestrian Trail Riders Action Committee,
- Green Foothills,
- Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County Chapter,
- Bay Area Older Adults,
- Alpine Tennis and Swimming Club,
- Roberts Market,
- Portola Valley Ranch Homeowners' Association,
- Community of Ladera,
- Portola Valley School District,
- Town of Portola Valley,
- City of Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission,
- City of Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Department,
- Representatives from the Anthropology Departments of Foothill College and Stanford University,
- Representatives from the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe,
- Neighbors from adjacent properties, and
- Members of the public who expressed interest in the project.

5.2 NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

On June 28, 2022, the District hosted a neighborhood meeting at the Town of Portola Valley Community Hall to solicit feedback from members of the Portola Valley community on existing conditions at the Hawthorns Area. Notifications for this meeting were disseminated throughout the town both virtually and on physical flyers posted at key locations, including Roberts Market, the Alpine Tennis and Swimming Club, and the Alpine Inn. Following a brief staff presentation, attendees joined breakout groups for facilitated discussions and provided their input for the District's consideration. In general, attendees agreed that the Hawthorns Area is a beautiful open space area that provides expansive views, diverse habitat, wildlife connectivity, and opportunities for recreational access, historic reuse and interpretation, and connections to existing Town trails. Attendees also noted that parking availability, spillover parking into nearby neighborhoods, user conflict on trails, and increased traffic congestion were key constraints.

5.3 SITE TOURS

Site tours were held at the Hawthorns Area throughout the summer and fall of 2022 to provide opportunities for members of the public to visit the Hawthorns Area and gain familiarity with the site and landscape. District staff and volunteer docents walked the property, describing the natural features and the development process of the Area Plan. Additional docent-led tours were established to continue tours on a quarterly basis while the Area Plan is in development.

5.4 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

The District held an in-person public open house on September 29, 2022 at the District's Administrative Office, as well as a virtual public open house on October 20, 2022, to engage broader audiences on the Hawthorns Area Plan. District staff were present at both events to discuss the planning process, answer questions, and receive feedback.

5.5 PUBLIC SURVEYS AND COMMENT CARDS

In addition to the stakeholder and public meetings, the District provided opportunities for public feedback through print and online forums, including a public survey and comment cards, which were open to the public during the Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Constraints Phase through the end of November.

5.6 BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

To date, the Hawthorns Area Plan has been brought before the District's Planning and Natural Resources Committee (PNR) at the following meetings:

- **May 18, 2021:** PNR received an informational presentation on the proposed planning and public engagement process for the Area Plan and provided input and guidance. ([R-21-65](#), [meeting minutes](#))

- **August 24, 2021:** PNR reviewed the proposed draft vision and goals and provided input and guidance. ([R-21-112, meeting minutes](#))
- **November 16, 2021:** PNR reviewed the revised vision and goals and draft public access working group strategy and provided further refinements. PNR unanimously recommended forwarding the refined vision and goal statements to the full Board for consideration. ([R-21-156, meeting minutes](#))
- **March 1, 2022:** PNR reviewed the proposed planning and public engagement process to develop the Hawthorns Area Plan. ([R-22-29, meeting minutes](#))

The Hawthorns Area Plan has also been brought before the full District Board at the following meetings:

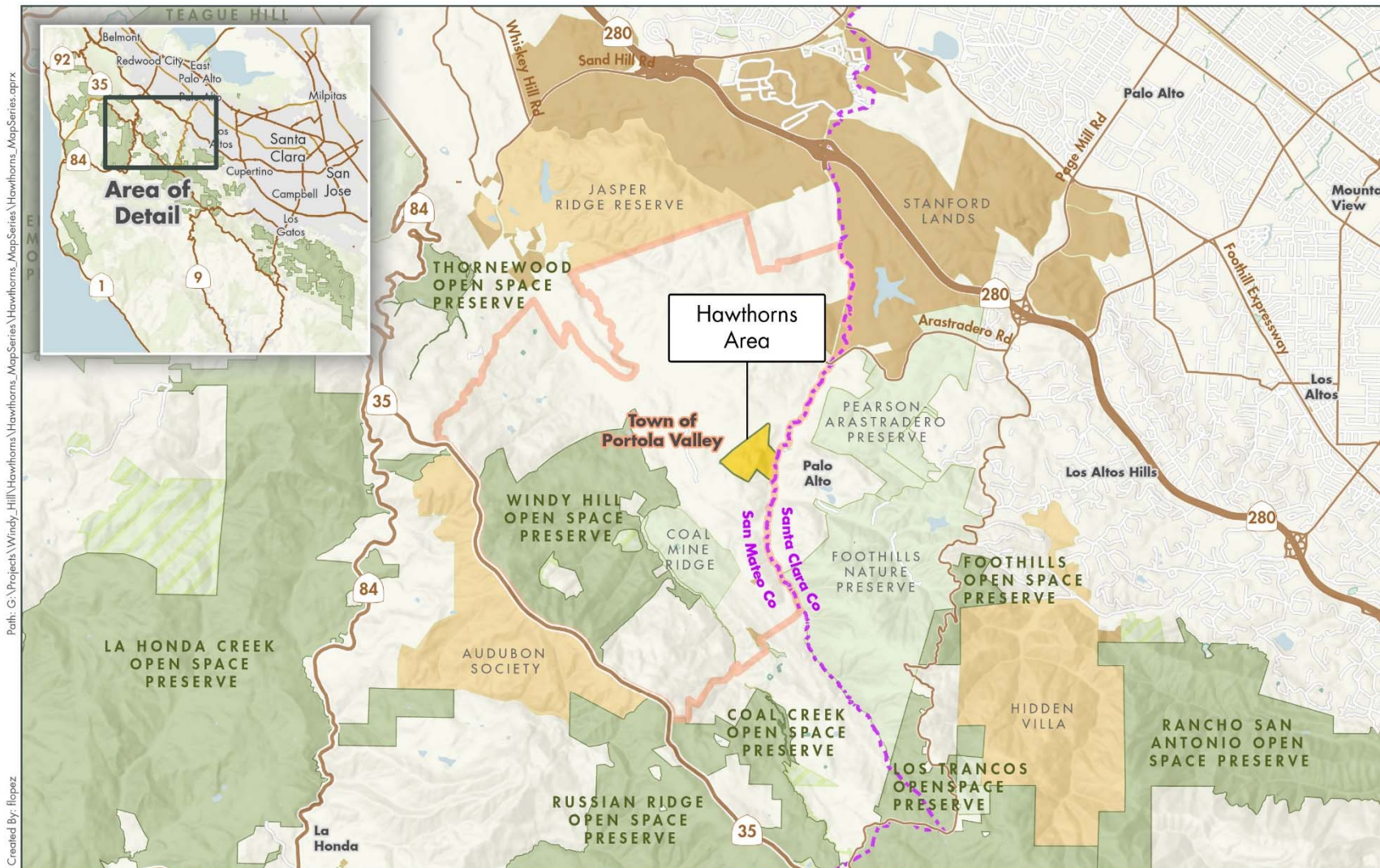
- **March 10, 2021:** Board received an [FYI memo](#) on the Hawthorns Area Public Access Project.
- **March 23, 2022:** Board reviewed and approved the Vision and Goals for the Hawthorns Area Plan. ([R-22-45, meeting minutes](#))
- **July 13, 2022:** Board reviewed the contract for the Hawthorns Area transportation study ([R-22-81, meeting minutes](#))

6.0 SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURES

1. Regional Map
2. Aerial Map
3. Topography and Vegetation Communities Map
4. Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (1/4)
5. Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (2/4)
6. Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (3/4)
7. Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (4/4)
8. Public Access Constraints Map— Natural and Cultural Resources
9. Public Access Constraints Map— Aesthetics
10. Public Access Constraints Map— All Constraints

7.0 APPENDICES

1. Preliminary Use and Management Plan (R-06-53) and Amendment (R-12-46)
2. Conservation Easement
3. Boundary Survey (BFK 2019)
4. Archeological Study: Phase I (Cogstone 2018)
5. Archeological Study: Phase II (Cogstone 2018)
6. Geotechnical Report (Treadwell & Rollo 2013)
7. Historic Resource Study (Knapp 2013)
8. Structure Conditions Assessment (Knapp 2013)
9. Structural Conditions Report (WJE 2022)
10. Bat and Woodrat Survey Report (MIG 2022)
11. Wetland Delineation Report (Stillwater Sciences 2022)
12. Environmental Site Assessment: Phase I (Rincon 2022)
13. Environmental Site Assessment: Phase II (Rincon 2022)



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Created By: flopez

Hawthorns Area - Regional Map

Hawthorns Area	Land Trust	County Boundary
MROSD Preserves	Other Public Agency	Portola Valley Town Boundary
Other Protected Lands	Private Property	

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen)
8/15/2023

OPEN SPACE

0 1 2 Miles

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

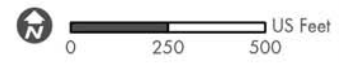
Supplemental Figure 1: Regional Map



Hawthorns Area - Aerial Map

-  Hawthorns Area
-  Building

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
9/9/2022



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

Supplemental Figure 2: Aerial Map

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Created By: Lopez



Source: SMC Enhanced Liform 2020

Hawthorns Area - Topography & Vegetation Communities

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|
| Hawthorns Area | Woodland | Olive Grove | Deciduous Hardwood |
| Building | Grassland | Developed | |

Contour interval
50 ft
10 ft



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(Midpen)
9/9/2022



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

Supplemental Figure 3: Topography and Vegetation Communities Map



Supplemental Figure 1: Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (1/4)



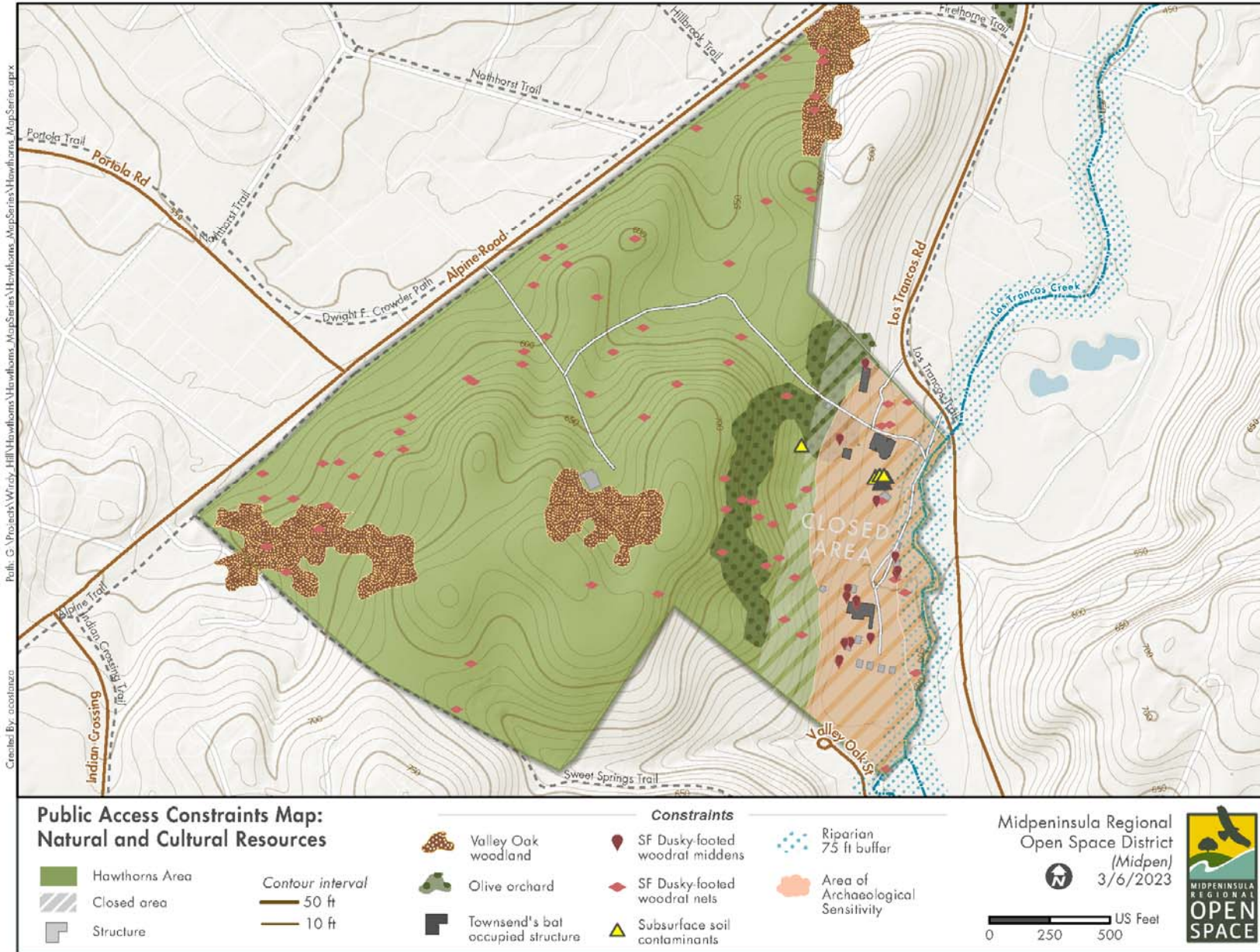
Supplemental Figure 2: Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (2/4)



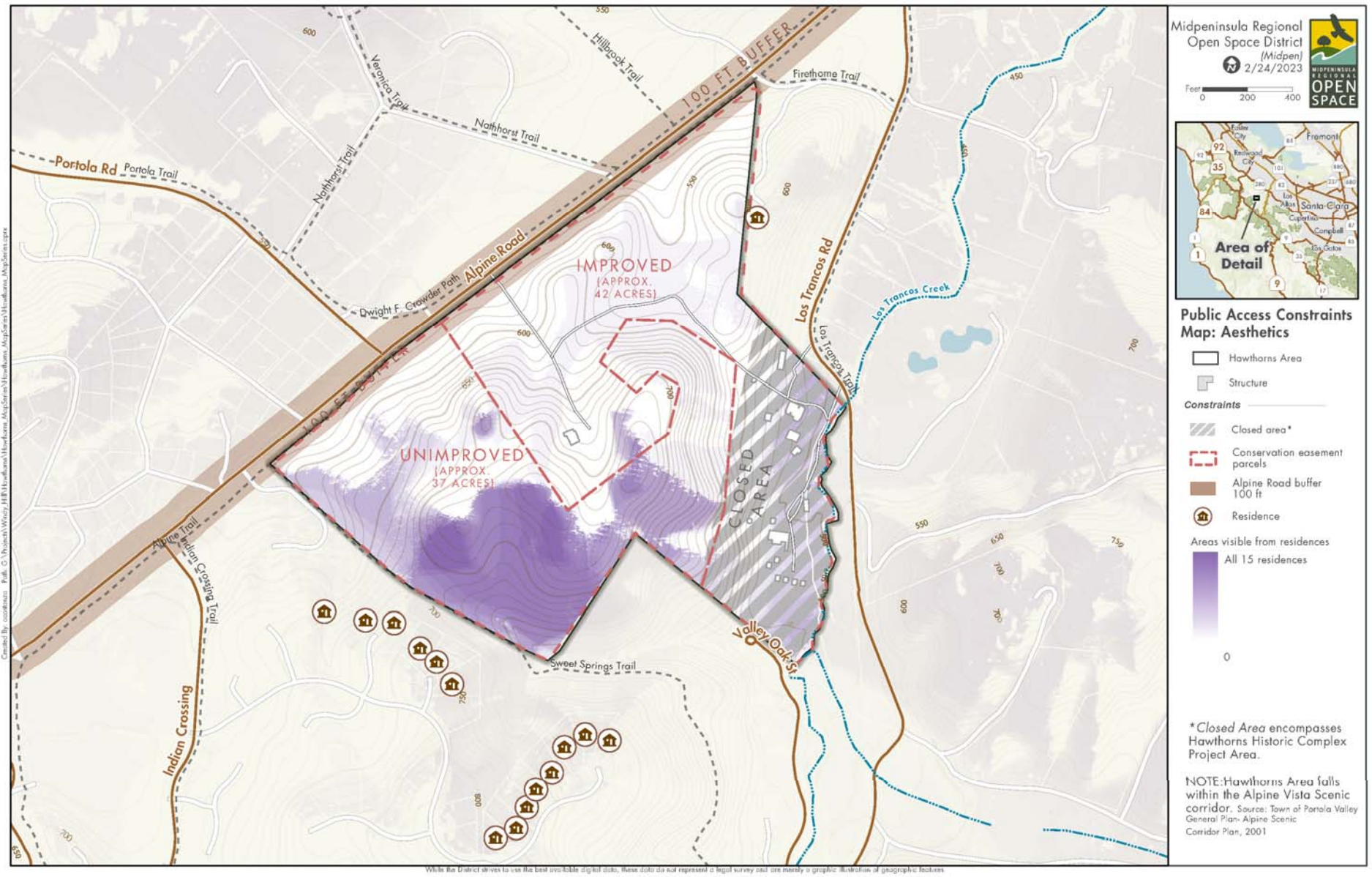
Supplemental Figure 3: Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (3/4)



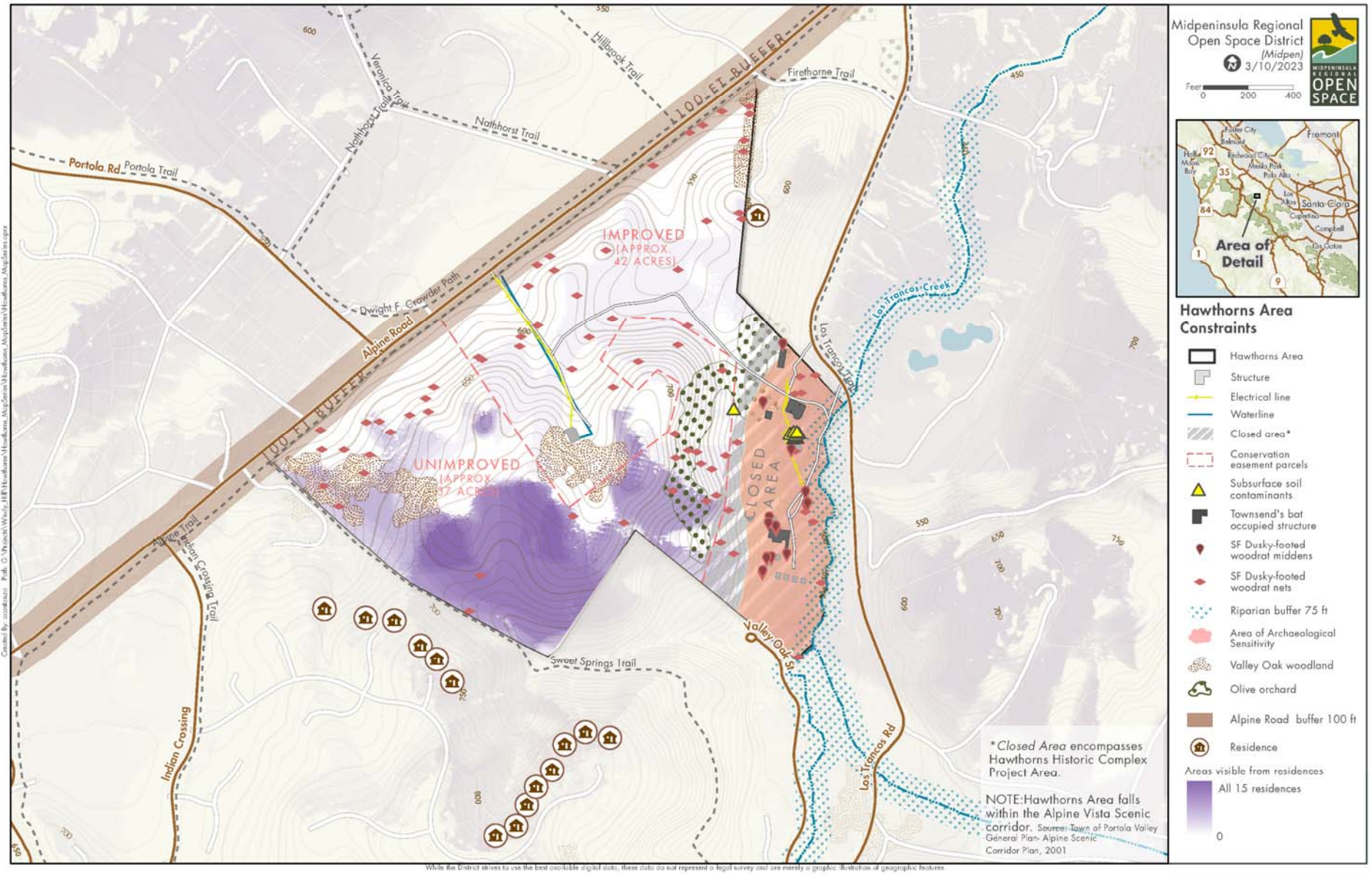
Supplemental Figure 4: Hawthorns Area Waters of the United States (4/4)



Supplemental Figure 8: Public Access Constraints Map— Natural and Cultural Resources



Supplemental Figure 9: Public Access Constraints Map— Aesthetics



Supplemental Figure 10: Public Access Constraints Map— All Constraints