



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-18-79
Meeting 18-28
July 11, 2018

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM

October Farm Grazing Lease at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

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Adopt a resolution authorizing the General Manager to enter into a five-year grazing lease with one five-year extension, with Doug Edwards, at October Farm in the Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

SUMMARY

For the past six years, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) has licensed, in holdover, the October Farm at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Preserve) to Mr. Doug Edwards for cattle grazing to support the District's conservation grazing program. Consistent with District Resource Management and Property Management Policies, the General Manager recommends adoption of a resolution by the Board of Directors (Board) to execute a new long-term grazing lease with Mr. Edwards to continue grazing activities at the Preserve. The District's conservation grazing program serves as a tool to manage native grasslands and reduce wildland fuel loads, while furthering the goals of the Coastal Service Plan by supporting sustainable agriculture on the San Mateo County coast.

DISCUSSION

The Board approved the acquisition of the 270-acre October Farm property from Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) on March 14, 2012 (R-12-30). When POST acquired the property from Ms. Bonnie Rapley in July 2011, she was running cattle on the property and planned to fully vacate the premises and remove the cattle since she was moving out of state. Prior to Ms. Rapley's ownership, Mr. Doug Edward's father, Bob, leased the land. Doug and his father ran cattle on the property for about four years in the 2000s.

When the District acquired the property from POST, Mr. Edwards was the grazing tenant on the District's Tunitas Creek property, which is located near October Farm. Tunitas Creek Ranch lacked a stable source of water during the prior drought in 2012. After acquiring October Farm, in an effort to continue effective conservation grazing on both properties, the District agreed to license October Farm to Mr. Edwards and allow him to move his cattle from Tunitas Creek to October Farm when necessary until a water source could be developed on Tunitas Creek Ranch. The District drilled a well and installed a water tank and trough on Tunitas Creek Ranch in 2015.

The Preliminary Use and Management Plan (PUMP) for October Farm that was approved with the purchase allowed for interim cattle grazing until a Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) was prepared and approved by the Board. Soon after the acquisition, the District entered into an interim grazing license with Mr. Edwards for a one-year term from June 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013. This license has remained in holdover, first awaiting completion of the RMP, which Sage Associates completed and the Board approved in April 2017 (R-17-51), and subsequently due to staffing transitions that delayed finalization of the lease for Board consideration until now.

Mr. Edwards has been managing both properties, Tunitas Creek Ranch and October Farm, together as a larger grazing operation. The Board recently approved a long-term (five-year term with one, five-year extension) grazing lease renewal with Mr. Edwards for Tunitas Creek on March 28, 2018 (R-18-27). Mr. Edwards rotates the cattle between Tunitas Creek Ranch and October Farm to take advantage of seasonal stock water and forage availability to ensure he meets the District's rangeland management objectives, including the Residual Dry Matter targets to protect the grassland habitat quality. Tunitas Creek and October Farm work very well when managed together given the proximity and complementary resource availability of the properties.

Mr. Edwards has worked closely with the District to protect areas of sensitive habitat on October Farm. He understands District policies and follows District guidelines, which include halting mowing activities during the nesting bird season and allowing the District to survey potential mowing areas to determine whether, when, and how, mowing should proceed to avoid impacts to natural resources. He has made significant improvement to the grasslands on the October Farm property through a methodical plan of coyote brush removal and thistle mowing. By utilizing a brush rake, which chops and rakes brush, he clears an area of coyote brush and then follows with the planting of approved grass seed. He realizes about a 50% recovery of the area with the first raking. By repeating the action in the same area the following season, he recovers nearly 100% of the area from invasive brush. He controls thistles by mowing and feeding his cattle on the clippings. The restored grasslands become forage for his cattle whose presence then prevents the recurrence of coyote brush. Mr. Edwards treats approximately 20 to 30 acres a year in this manner.

In the past, the Board has approved entering into a long-term lease with existing tenants in good standing without issuing a request for proposals. As part of the management of grazing leases, District staff utilize the following criteria to evaluate grazing tenant performance:

- Rent paid on time
- Stays within the acceptable range for Residual Dry Matter as prescribed in Rangeland/Grazing Management Plan and lease
- Follows stocking rate guidelines
- Completes or makes progress on annual work plans
- Refrains from performing unauthorized work
- Works cooperatively with District staff to attain resource management goals
- Meets District, local, state, or federal laws, regulations and/or policies
- Accommodates public use of property (this property is closed to public use at this time)

Mr. Edwards has satisfactorily met the above listed performance standards, and the District's land stewardship and sustainability goals with respect to October Farm. As such, he is deemed to be a tenant in good standing. Continuing the conservation grazing program on this property under a lease to Mr. Edwards is the most efficient way to achieve the District's resource

management goals to protect grassland habitat and native biodiversity, reduce wildland fuel loads, and meet Coastal Service Plan commitments to support sustainable agriculture on the San Mateo County coast.

FISCAL IMPACT

Sufficient funds remain in the Land & Facilities Department FY 2018-19 budget to cover the maintenance costs associated with the recommendation for chopping and/or raking of invasive coyote brush. Staff will request similar maintenance budgets for future fiscal years. The lease will also generate income, which will fluctuate depending on current Animal Unit Month (AUM) price and the number and age of cattle on the property. Similar rent incomes and management costs associated with the grazing lease are expected in future fiscal years and would be included in future fiscal year budgets.

	<i>FY 2018-19 Budget Estimates</i>
Rent income	\$3,004.00
Chopping and/or raking expense	\$4,500.00

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

A Board Committee did not previously review this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

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

NEXT STEPS

If approved, the General Manager would sign a five-year cattle-grazing lease with the option for one additional five-year extension, for a total not to exceed ten-year term, with Doug Edwards, provided he has met all District requirements, including appropriate insurance certificates and endorsements.

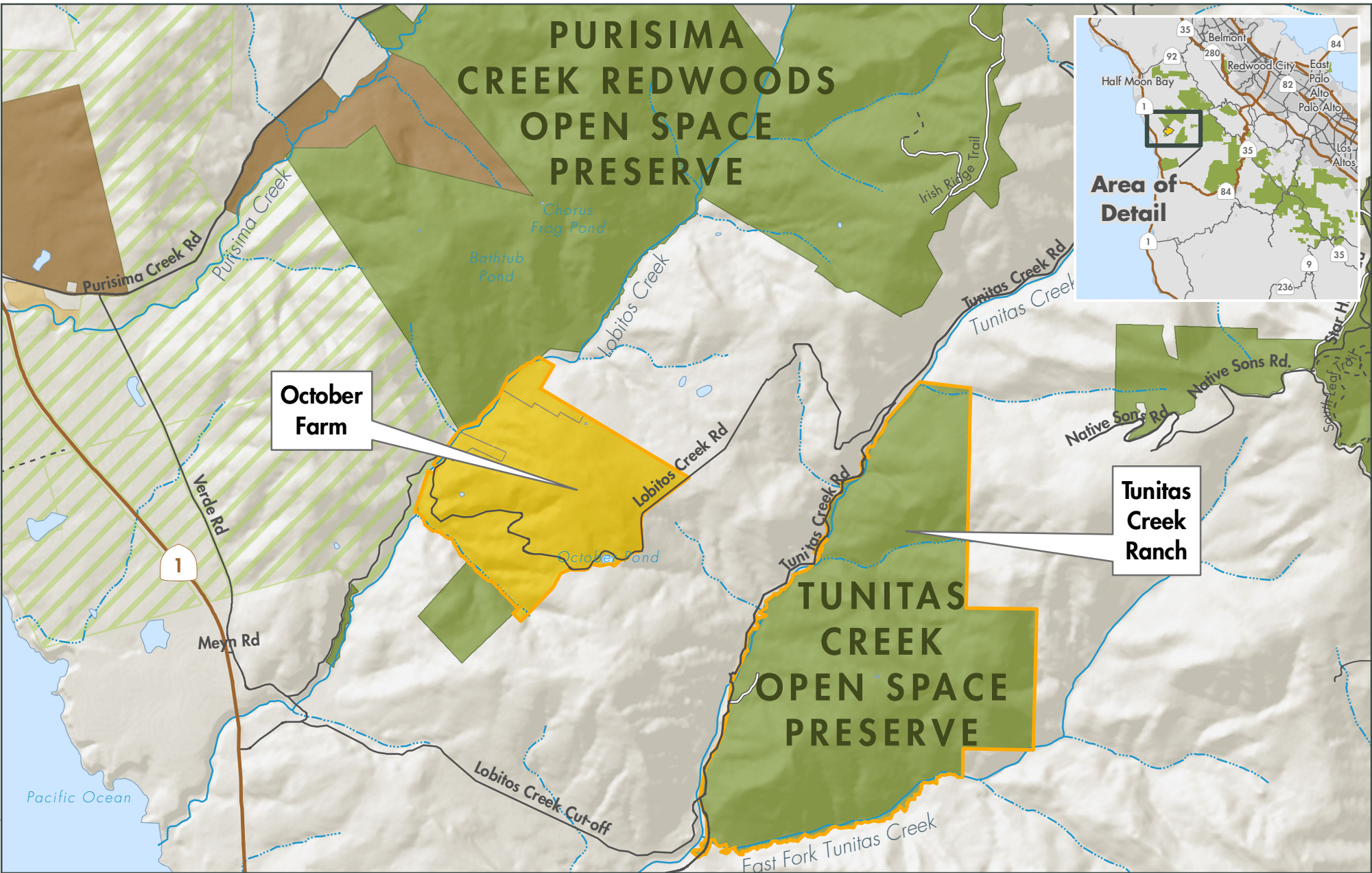
Attachment(s)

1. Location Map
2. Resolution Approving the Award of a Grazing Lease to Doug Edwards (October Farm, Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve)

Responsible Department Head:
Michael Jurich, Acting Land & Facilities Services Manager

Prepared by/Contact Person:
Susan Weidemann, Property Management Specialist II

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Created By: thammer



October Farm

-  MROSD Preserves
-  Other Public Agency
-  October Farm
-  Land Trust
-  Non MROSD Conservation or Agricultural Easement
-  Grazing Leases of Interest
-  Private Property

ATTACHMENT 1

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(MROSD)
June 2018



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.

RESOLUTION 18-__

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT APPROVING THE AWARD OF A GRAZING LEASE TO DOUG EDWARDS (OCTOBER FARM, PURISIMA CREEK REDWOODS OPEN SPACE PRESERVE)

WHEREAS, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) may, under the provisions of California Public Resources Code section 5540, lease property owned by the District; and

WHEREAS, the lease of the October Farm for grazing and rangeland management purposes is compatible with park and open space purposes, and the lease of such premises is in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, the District wishes to renew its lease of October Farm to Doug Edwards on the terms hereinafter set forth.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District does hereby resolve as follows:

1. The General Manager is authorized to execute the Grazing Lease on behalf of the District. The General Manager, with the concurrence of the General Counsel, is authorized to make minor changes to the Grazing Lease that do not materially amend the terms and conditions thereof.
2. The General Manager is authorized to grant an extension of the Grazing Lease on the terms and conditions set forth in the Grazing Lease. The General Manager shall report any such extension of the Grazing Lease to the Board of Directors at the Board meeting immediately following the granting of the extension. The General Manager or designee is further authorized to sign and approve all other documents necessary or appropriate to entering into the Grazing Lease.

* * * * *

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District on _____, 2018, at a regular meeting thereof, by the following vote:

- AYES:**
- NOES:**
- ABSTAIN:**
- ABSENT:**

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Secretary
Board of Directors

President
Board of Directors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

General Counsel

I, the District Clerk of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District by the above vote at a meeting thereof duly held and called on the above day.

District Clerk