



FACT SHEET: PENINSULA OPEN SPACE TRUST'S APPLE ORCHARD, EVENT CENTER & RIPARIAN EASEMENT PROPERTIES AS ADDITIONS TO LA HONDA CREEK OPEN SPACE PRESERVE

Size: Approximately 310 acres, consisting of four distinct properties

Location: Unincorporated San Mateo County, along La Honda Road (Highway 84), and west of the Town of La Honda.

- The 292-acre Apple Orchard property, located at the western edge of the Town of La Honda - the property is adjacent to the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve) along the property's northerly boundary and San Gregorio Creek along the property's southern boundary.
- The 11.83-acre Event Center, located two miles west of the Town of La Honda - the Event Center is bordered by La Honda Road to the north and adjacent to San Gregorio Creek along the property's southern boundary.
- The 3.65-acres at 5711 La Honda Road (La Honda Road Residence), located two miles west of the Town of La Honda - the property is across from the Event Center and is surrounded by the Preserve to the east, west and north.
- A 2.75-acre Riparian Conservation Easement on San Gregorio Creek across two residential parcels, located west of the Event Center.

Purchase and Funding: The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) Board of Directors will consider purchase of the above referenced properties owned by Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in 2015 for inclusion into the Preserve. Funding for the purchase is included in Measure AA as Project #7-1 and as part of the District's Real Property Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- In December 2013, the District entered into a Lease and Management Agreement with POST to manage the Apple Orchard, Event Center and the La Honda Road Residence as part of the Preserve until such time as funding could be secured for purchase from POST.
- Under the Lease and Management Agreement, the District executed an interim grazing license for the Apple Orchard with a local rancher.
- Since December 2013, the District, has implemented various resource protection projects and completed ranch infrastructure improvements including water system upgrades, road repairs, and fencing.
- In July 2014, the District developed an Event Center Facilities Use Agreement and fee structure when permitting use of the Event Center for equestrian and livestock trainings or clinics, and agricultural and environmental education events.

Land Use:

The San Mateo County General Plan Land Use designation for all parcels associated with the purchase is Open Space-Rural. All parcels are zoned RM (Resource Management District). Current land uses consist of grazing, pasturing, allowable uses of the Event Center by District permit, and a single family residence.

Prior to purchase of these properties by POST, the properties were part of the larger complex of coastal ranchland properties known as the Driscoll Ranch Properties. In 2002, 3680 acres of the Driscoll Ranch Properties was purchased by POST and then acquired by the District in 2006. The District dedicated the property as permanent parkland and included it in the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. A Master Plan and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the expanded Preserve was approved by the District's Board of Directors in August 2012. The properties proposed for purchase comprise remainder portions of the Driscoll Ranch holdings.

The Apple Orchard is coastal ranchland, grazed by an adjacent landowner under an interim grazing license with the District. The property includes a vacant residence in fair condition that was previously used seasonally by the former owner, open barn, outbuildings, livestock watering troughs, and the remnants of a small apple orchard. The property has two seasonal access points from a public right-of-way: one from La Honda Road that requires fording of San Gregorio Creek, and a second access from Sears Ranch Road in the Town of La Honda. The interim grazing tenant also has access to the property from his adjoining ranch.

The Event Center contains a pasture, several fenced corrals, two horse barns, storage garage, small office building, arena, round pen, and rodeo stands. Access is from La Honda Road. The property also has a tunnel under the highway that provides connection to District property on the north side of the road. The District is working with Caltrans to perfect District ownership of the tunnel. The tunnel allows small vehicles, pedestrians, and livestock to pass under the highway. Current uses of the Event Center include pasturing of up to 5 horses and an area for livestock staging by the grazing tenant on the Driscoll Ranch area of the Preserve via the tunnel under La Honda Road. The Event Center is also available for equestrian and ranching events, as allowed under the Facilities Use Agreement. To date, one group used the site for an equestrian training event in 2014 and one event is scheduled for 2015.

The parcel that comprises the La Honda Road residence contains a two bedroom house in average condition. The house was leased back by the former owner until November 1, 2015. Access to the residence is from La Honda Road.

The Riparian Conservation Easement on two residential parcels owned by POST that are located west of the Event Center will protect a 100-foot wide corridor of the San Gregorio Creek as natural and wooded riparian habitat. San Gregorio Creek is spawning habitat for Coho Salmon and Steelhead.

Landscape:

The Apple Orchard consists of rolling grasslands, steep wooded or brushy canyons, and a small redwood grove along San Gregorio Creek. There are several springs on-site that supply livestock watering troughs. The terrain varies from 840 feet in elevation along the northerly boundary to an elevation of 300 feet along San Gregorio Creek.

The Event Center is an open and level site, located parallel to La Honda Road and bordered by San Gregorio Creek. The San Gregorio riparian corridor is densely wooded with a mixture of oak, bays, alders, firs and redwoods. The District has installed wildlife-friendly fencing approximately 100 feet from the creek bank.

The land around the La Honda Road Residence is open grassland, on a rise overlooking the Event Center and La Honda Road. Due to its elevation above the road, it enjoys good views of the Preserve and surrounding San Gregorio watershed.

The Riparian Conservation Easement area on San Gregorio Creek supports an established riparian habitat consisting of an overstory of redwoods, live oaks, maples, bays, alders, willows, and buckeyes and an understory of ferns, moss, sedges, blackberries, grasses, vines and woody shrubs.

Resources:

The upland areas of the Apple Orchard and the La Honda Road residence contain annual grasslands and coastal chaparral. Seasonal drainages support oak woodland and mixed evergreen forests. Areas adjacent to San Gregorio Creek at the Event Center and the area considered for the Riparian Conservation Easement support significant amounts of woody riparian habitat and species diversity. The Event Center areas outside of the riparian zone are primarily pasture. Dense roadside vegetation screens views of the Event Center from La Honda Road.

The properties provide varied habitat for wildlife, including mountain lions, deer, coyotes, and bobcats. A wide variety of birds frequent this landscape, including raptors such as Golden Eagles, red tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, white tailed kite, peregrine falcon, sharp-shinned hawks and many songbirds. Aquatic species such as Steelhead and Coho salmon inhabit San Gregorio Creek.

Hydrology: The Apple Orchard, Event Center, and area of the Riparian Conservation Easement possess significant riparian and watershed protection values for San Gregorio Creek and for the greater San Gregorio Creek Watershed. The Apple Orchard includes a tributary and several springs that flow into San Gregorio Creek.

NEXT STEPS

Environmental Review:

Environmental review of the purchase is underway in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Board Action:

The District anticipates approval of the purchase and Preliminary Use and Management Plan in July 2015. Upon purchase, the properties will be added to the Preserve. The Preliminary Use and Management Plan will recommend that the current uses continue until at least 2017, pending further planning (as described below), and the interim grazing license for the Apple Orchard be converted to a long-term grazing lease with the existing tenant. The Preliminary Use and Management Plan will also address the interim management and maintenance of the site, its natural resources, and site facilities. The La Honda Road Residence will continue to be managed under the District's Property Management Program. The Riparian Conservation Easement will be monitored regularly by District staff to ensure that this section of San Gregorio Creek is managed to benefit natural resources and the watershed.

Future Planning Considerations:

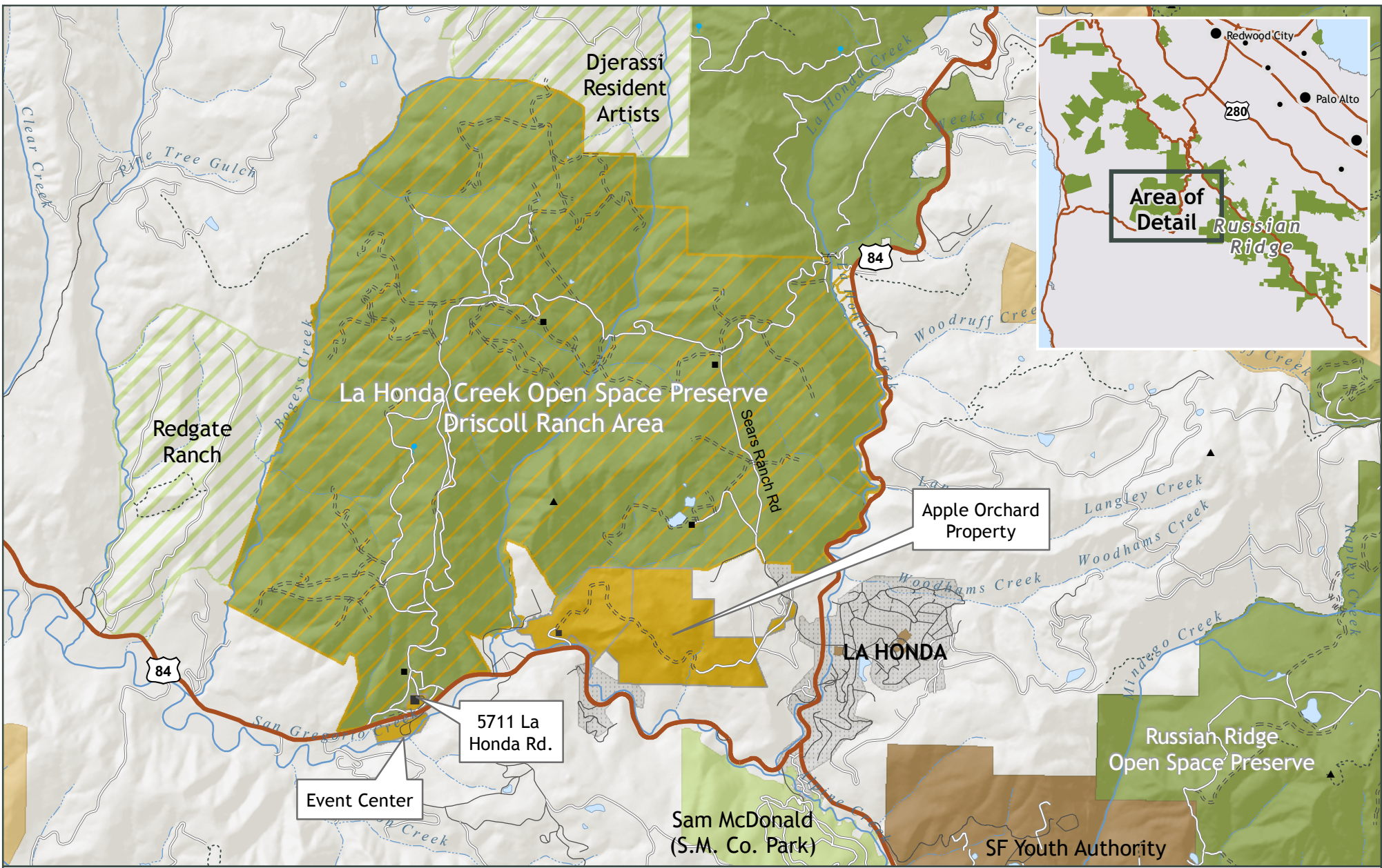
As part of the implementation of the Preserve Master Plan, the District anticipates construction of two new staging areas and trails systems in the Preserve within the next two to three years, whereby previously closed areas of the Preserve will be opened to new visitors. After the new staging areas and trails are in use, the District will compile information on the use patterns of the Preserve, including type and frequency of events at the Event Center. The District will then determine if further site planning for operating the Event Center for agriculture, ranching and environmental education events is warranted. As part of any subsequent planning for long term uses on the site, the District may consider other possible uses such as public staging and trail use to integrate the Event Center into the Preserve, District needs for additional facilities or field patrol office in the Coastside area, and additional natural resource protection of San Gregorio Creek fisheries. Further environmental review will be prepared as needed.

When the lease on the La Honda Road Residence expires in November 2015, the District will evaluate the possible use of the site as an employee residence, temporary Field Operations facility, or other residential use.

Subsequent planning will be done in accordance with the District's Coastside Protection Program Service Plan, including consultation with appropriate agencies and organizations. The planning process will include public meetings to gather input and to review draft and final plans. When additional studies of the Event Center and other affected areas have been completed and preferred long-term uses identified, the District will complete environmental review and determine if it is necessary to amend the Preserve Master Plan.

Public Participation: Interested parties are encouraged to contact Lupe Hernandez, Real Property Administrative Assistant, at the District office (650) 691-1200 to request that their names be added to the public notification list for this proposed property purchase.

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Created By: chhatt



Attachment A: POST Apple Orchard & Event Center

Apple Orchard & Event Center	Other Protected Open Space or Park Lands	Private Property	Structure
Driscoll Ranch	Other Public Agency	Developed Land	
MROSD Preserves	Land Trust	Non MROSD Conservation or Agricultural Easement	

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD)
June, 2015

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