



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

## LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

R-19-14  
February 5, 2019

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

### AGENDA ITEM

Recognition of Significant Partners at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Forward to the full Board of Directors the following recommended list of partners to be recognized for their significant contributions towards the preservation, stewardship, and public opening of Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve:

- Peninsula Open Space Trust;
- California State Coastal Conservancy;
- California Wildlife Conservation Board;
- Santa Clara Valley Water District;
- Former State Senator Byron Sher; and
- Committee for Green Foothills.

### SUMMARY

In accordance with the *Partner Recognition Signboard* in Board Policy 5.01, the General Manager recommends recognizing six (6) organizations or individuals whose partnership with and support for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) significantly contributed towards the preservation, stewardship, and public opening of Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Preserve).

The California State Coastal Conservancy, California Wildlife Conservation Board, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) would be recognized for their significant grant funding support. Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), Former State Senator Byron Sher, and the Committee for Green Foothills would be recognized for their advocacy, fundraising efforts, and land negotiations that led to the preservation and acquisition of the Preserve.

### DISCUSSION

In the late 1990s, the District became aware of a land purchase opportunity along Bear Creek Road, which ultimately became the present day Preserve. The District was able to acquire and open this Preserve with the help of many individuals and partner organizations. Per the Partner Recognition Signboard provision in Board Policy 5.01, the General Manager recommends recognizing partners who have made conspicuous or noteworthy contributions of cash, land, and/or time that were instrumental to the conservation, restoration, management, and/or public

opening of the Preserve. To acknowledge these contributions, a partner recognition signboard that includes partner logos and names would be installed at the new Alma College parking area, adjacent to the District's standard trailhead signboards. In addition, given the Preserve's unique conservation history, a separate interpretive sign would be installed near the new parking area to tell the story of how community and political advocacy, together with key leadership actions by multiple organizations, made the conservation of this property possible.

### **Proposed Partners for Recognition**

Six (6) partners are recommended for recognition and inclusion in a new Partner Recognition Signboard: POST, California State Coastal Conservancy, California Wildlife Conservation Board, SCVWD, Former State Senator Byron Sher, and Committee for Green Foothills. Since this Preserve will open in phases, the signboard will maintain available space for future partner recognitions.

- **POST** was an instrumental partner in the acquisition of the Preserve. On June 28, 1999, POST acquired the 805-acre Upper Property of the Preserve (formerly known as "Lands of the Arlie Land and Cattle Company"). Grant funds, along with POST's private donations, enabled the District to acquire the property from POST at the discounted sale price of \$10 million.
- **California State Coastal Conservancy** provided a \$3 million grant for the acquisition of the Upper Property and a \$1,682,500 grant in 2003 for the acquisition of a 198-acre addition to the Preserve.
- **California Wildlife Conservation Board** provided \$2 million in grant funding for the acquisition of the Upper Property.
- **SCVWD** provided a \$149,500 grant for the construction of Webb Creek Bridge, a critical creek crossing for opening the western area of the Preserve to public access. In addition to the construction grant, the District also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SCVWD for invasive species removal within the Preserve. This MOU grants \$200,000 per year to the District for five years, totaling \$1 million.
- **Former State Senator Byron Sher** provided the District with significant support through lobbying efforts and legislation, both of which helped the District gain support and grant funding. His legislative efforts included the creation of the San Francisco Bay Program under the Coastal Conservancy in 1999, from which the District received a \$3 million grant. In addition, Senator Sher's yearlong lobbying effort resulted in the California Wildlife Conservation Board approving a \$2 million grant. In 2003, Senator Sher's efforts supported an additional \$1,682,500 Coastal Conservancy grant for a 198-acre addition to the Preserve.
- The **Committee for Green Foothills** strongly opposed the prior estate and golf course development proposal on the Lower Property of the Preserve and helped the District gain support at both local and state levels.

Note that grant agreements with the California State Coastal Conservancy, California Wildlife Conservation Board and SCVWD all require recognition signs to be posted at the Preserve. This partner recognition signboard would fulfill these requirements.

### **Preservation Story Interpretive Signage**

A separate, preservation story interpretive sign is under development for the Preserve. This interpretive sign will explain how partners and political advocacy made the acquisition possible to preserve important mixed evergreen and second growth redwood forests in Santa Clara County. This sign will provide additional context, background, and inspiration about this conservation effort. The organizations to be recognized in the interpretive sign are POST, Committee for Green Foothills, Friends of Bear Creek Redwoods and the County of Santa Clara. Staff contacted key people involved in the acquisition, such as the District's former General Manager, Craig Britton, and POST's former President, Audrey Rust, for narratives and information to consider for the preservation story interpretive sign. The interpretive sign is undergoing review. If there are any changes to the organizations recognized on this sign, the changes will be incorporated into the Feb 27 Board report for review.

### **Web Application: Story Map**

An online web application, a Story Map, will provide additional context and details of the Preserve's acquisition history. Story Maps combine text, imagery, and cartography to create engaging educational materials. The Story Map for the Preserve will include a chapter on the preservation story. This section will describe development threats, advocacy efforts, and the ultimate land purchase and preservation outcome. It will also include a video of interviews with individuals involved in the preservation efforts surrounding the Preserve. Staff has filmed and/or is planning interviews with former staff from the District, POST, County of Santa Clara and Committee for Green Foothills.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget includes sufficient funds for the Partner Recognition Signboard (\$5,100), internal signboard content (\$250), and the preservation story interpretive sign (\$8,000), at a total cost of approximately \$14,000.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

Installation of signboards, trailhead and trail signage were evaluated in the Preserve Plan EIR and include identity signs, use signs, safety signs, private property signs, interpretive and protective signs, and regional trail connection signs. On January 25, 2017, the Board of Directors adopted a resolution certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report, making certain findings of fact, approving a Statement of Overriding Considerations and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan, and approving the Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve Plan including the Bear Creek Stables Site Plan and the Alma College Cultural Landscape Rehabilitation Plan.

**NEXT STEPS**

If supported by the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee, the General Manager would forward the recommendation to the full Board for review and consideration.

Attachment

1. Signboard mockup

Responsible Department Head:

Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Manager

Prepared by:

Melissa Borgesi, Planner I, Planning Department

Sign structure: 53" x 39"  
Signboard: 42" x 28"  
Signs: 12.5" x 12.5" each

