



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Senior Coastsiders Building
925 Main St.
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

**Tuesday, April 9, 2019
2:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Director Kishimoto called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at to order at 2:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Karen Holman, and Yoriko Kishimoto

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Resource Management Specialist I Matt Sharp Chaney, Property Management Specialist II Susan Weidemann

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to adopt the agenda, as amended.

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Selection of Committee Chair

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to select Director Kishimoto to serve as Committee chair.

Director Kishimoto accepted the nomination.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Approve the January 22, 2019 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Minutes

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the January 22, 2019 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Draft Grazing Management Policy Amendment, Wildlife and Livestock Protection (R-19-40)

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening comments summarizing the project and upcoming project milestones.

Resource Management Specialist I Matt Sharp Chaney described the agenda for the meeting and introduced the various presenters and topics to be discussed.

District Property Management Specialist II Susan Weidemann described the District's current conservation grazing program in San Mateo County, including the amount of land grazed, program goals, and the grazing management policy. Ms. Weidemann described the District's administrative practice for reimbursing grazing tenants for livestock lost due to a confirmed predation kill.

Terris Kasteen of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reported on the legal status of California predators, including coyotes and mountain lions. Ms. Kasteen explained the various statutes that govern killing, trapping, and releasing of these predators. Mountain lions are a specially protected species, which require a depredation permit to kill. Ms. Kasteen described the process that must be followed to be issued a depredation permit and the depredation impacts on mountain lion population levels.

Veronica Yovovich a wildlife conflict specialist described the results of District tenant surveys, including tenant concerns regarding predation, animals lost to predation, and the difficulty in confirming predation losses. Ms. Yovovich reviewed local agency predation policies and the effectiveness of tools aimed at reducing the threat of predation, such as hunting, night penning, livestock guarding animals, and fencing. Finally, Ms. Yovovich described components for a successful livestock protection program, such as varying the tools and tailoring them to the livestock operation.

Mr. Sharp Chaney provided an overview of the proposed grazing management policy amendment, which seeks to ensure the sustainability of the conservation grazing program in areas where predation may occur. Mr. Sharp Chaney described the development of the policy amendment to date and future milestones, such as Committee and Board meetings, agricultural partner workshops, and meetings with the San Mateo County Farm Bureau. The four components of the proposed policy are to 1) seek to provide economic relief in response to loss from predation; 2) reduce the number of conflicts between wildlife and livestock to protect both; 3) research to understand the effectiveness of livestock protection methods; and 4) connect the

public to agricultural operations such as through a potential range rider program. Finally, Mr. Sharp Chaney provided a summary of the feedback received from the San Mateo County Farm Bureau and from a meeting with partner agencies.

Sheila Barry from the University of California Cooperative Extension described the process for engaging stakeholders and format for planned stakeholder meetings.

Director Holman inquired regarding the use rodenticide on non-District lands.

Mr. Sharp Chaney reported necropsies are completed on deceased mountain lions, which typically show evidence of at least two rodenticides.

Director Holman suggested the District should look more into this issue because rodenticides affect animals on District lands and reduces the quantity of native prey.

Director Holman stated her concern that lowering the AUM may lower the amount of data that could be collected on the topic.

Director Kishimoto suggested the District should factor in the health of the larger ecosystem and the impact of removing predators and the effect of deer prey availability for predators.

Director Kishimoto suggested a metric to determine an acceptable level of loss.

Public comment opened at 3:38 p.m.

BJ Burns commented on the need to create a management program for mountain lions, which may also predate in more urban areas when there is a lack of prey in rural areas.

Vince Fontana commented on the accuracy of the numbers of confirmed kills on District lands because not all of the suspected predatory kills may be able to be confirmed.

Ron Sturgeon commented that the District's management of the predator problem creates additionally issues because it allows predators to remain on the land.

Benjamin Wright Farmland Manager for the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) commented on the progress the District has already made on the topic and provided further clarification of POST's support for various options for conflict mitigation measures.

Doug Edwards suggested a potential range rider program would need to be operated during the day because it could stress the cattle during calving season.

Public comment closed at 3:46 p.m.

Director Cyr stated the District should continue to modify the policy based on experience over time.

Director Holman commented that calving sheds may be helpful.

Director Kishimoto spoke in favor of reducing AUM rates in conjunction with reimbursement payments and in favor of requiring non-lethal mitigation methods.

Director Kishimoto spoke in favor of reducing conflicts between livestock and wildlife by promoting and implementing livestock protection methods that reduce livestock losses while safeguarding native wildlife populations and suggested adopting a tiered set of policies similar to the integrated pest management program or the “three-strikes” process used in Southern California.

Director Kishimoto suggested including language related to the use of capture and release of mountain lions.

Director Kishimoto requested additional information on the local agency case studies when this item returns to the Committee.

Director Cyr requested additional information regarding whether there are increases in predation in other local agencies.

Ms. Yovovich reported other agencies, such as East Bay Regional Park District, experience additional predation from domestic dogs rather than mountain lions due to the geography of that area.

Director Holman requested additional information regarding the proposed volunteer range rider program.

Mr. Sharp Chaney explained the volunteers would help monitor the landscape and cattle during the day and could help implement other mitigation measures, such as lights or noisemakers. This program would be developed in cooperation with the District’s grazing tenants.

No Committee action required

ADJOURNMENT

Director Kishimoto adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 4:11 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk