



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

# Memorandum

DATE: April 24, 2019

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Ana Ruiz, Acting General Manager *aruiz*

FROM: Matt Baldzikowski, Senior Resource Management Specialist

SUBJECT: La Honda Preserve Forest Management Plan

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Natural Resource Department staff will release a Request for Proposals for the development of a La Honda Preserve Forest Management Plan (Forest Plan) in April 2019, with award of contract scheduled for approval at the Board of Director's (Board) June 26, 2019 regular meeting.

The La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan (Master Plan) includes a Forest Management Element, which directs District forest management efforts to begin with surveys to document specific conditions within the preserve. The Master Plan also identifies possible opportunities to manage portions of the forest to accelerate the development of late-seral conditions, with the goal of protecting and restoring old, mature, forest habitat for wildlife, fire resiliency, and to increase carbon uptake and storage. Additionally there are opportunities to reduce erosion from previously constructed logging roads, and to restore water courses within the preserve.

The District's landholdings include a total of approximately 30,000 acres of forest and woodland habitat. Much of the forest and woodland habitat was altered by historical land use practices including: timber and fuelwood harvesting, agriculture uses, residential development, and fire suppression activities.

Forests today are markedly different than forests prior to the gold rush era settlement of California. These changes are most visible within redwood forests, where the widely spaced stumps of the original old growth forests remain and contrast with the often crowded stands of small diameter redwoods that have sprouted from the stumps of cut trees. Changes within oak, mixed hardwood, and riparian forests have also occurred, although the alterations are often less apparent. For example, old stumps in these ecosystems do not persist as evidence of the former habitat as they do in redwoods; and some riparian species such as sycamore and cottonwood may have been completely removed to accommodate floodplain land use, leaving only narrow strips of willow and alder trees along the immediate margins of creeks. Many of these alterations began over a century ago, and are difficult to recognize in the current landscape.

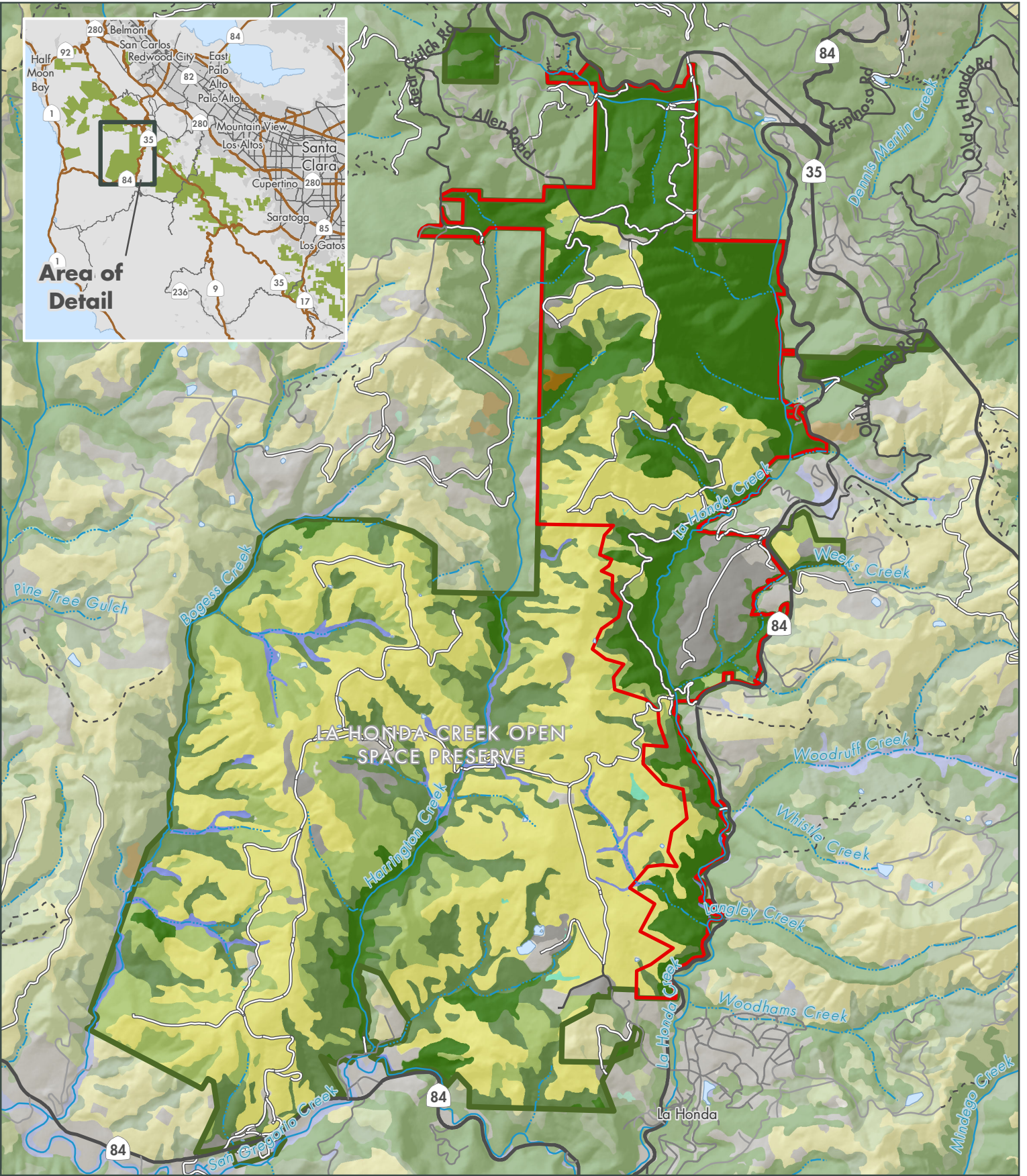
The District's Resource Management Policies contains a chapter on Forest Management with the following goals: "to retain and promote biologically diverse, dynamic forest conditions; maintain and enhance high quality forest and aquatic habitat; encourage and enhance the development of late-seral conifer forest; provide for visitor experiences within diverse forest habitat; and promote regional fire management objectives".

The Forest Management Policies offer the following guidance on how to achieve these goals:

- Forest Management Policy FM-1 directs staff to inventory and assess District forests and woodlands. Inventories should assess forest age, structure, health, regeneration, biological legacies (such as residual old growth), and the reconnection and restoration of late-seral conifer habitat. Late-seral or late-succession redwood forests are defined as older maturing forests (between 100-300 years) with characteristics similar to old growth forests (typically 400 up to 2000 years old).
- The Forest Management Policy also directs the District to provide necessary fire and fuel management practices to protect forest resources as well as public health and safety (FM-5); and to monitor wildlife, water quality, and vegetation response to forest management activities (FM-7).
- Forest Management Policy FM-4 directs staff to prepare Forest Management Plans for high priority District conifer forests. Natural Resources staff have selected the La Honda Forest as the location for the first forest inventory and management plan. The La Honda Forest encompasses the eastern portion of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, roughly following La Honda Creek, and includes the Northern portion of the Preserve (see attached map).

The La Honda Forest was selected as the District's first forest management plan location due to the variety of forest habitats and conditions, watershed restoration opportunity, and proximity to the wildland-urban interface with the surrounding rural residential communities of La Honda and Skylonda. The Forest Plan will draw from the substantial resource and preserve data already gathered to support the Master Plan. A portion of the preserve was designated as a closed Conservation Management Unit (CMU) due to an intensive timber harvest history. Many of the former dirt logging roads are in poor condition and should be restored to prevent erosion and sedimentation in adjacent creeks. Forest management work in the CMU area will not conflict with recreational access since this area is designated as closed to public access.

Upon completion of the Draft Forest Plan, the consultant and staff will present the draft Forest Plan, including opportunities and recommendations for management, to the Board of Directors (Board) at a public study session. The draft plan may be revised based upon comments by the Board and public, and then finalized. The final Forest Plan will be presented to the Board at a regular public Board Meeting for final action. Upon approval, specific forest management projects will proceed and be brought to the Board during the budget preparation process.



### La Honda Forest Project

- Preserve Boundary
- Trail
- Project\_Area
- Grassland
- Paved Road
- Coastal Scrub
- Unopened Road
- Chaparral

### La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

- Hardwood Forest
- Redwood and Douglas Fir
- Weedy Ruderal Grassland
- Riparian
- Wetland

Midpeninsula Regional  
 Open Space District  
 (MROSD)  
 April 2019



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.