

Conservation Grazing RFP

February 20th informational meeting



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Agenda

- **Welcome and introductory remarks**
- **Conservation Grazing Program Overview (Lewis Reed)**
- **2025 RFP process background (Brandon Stewart)**
- **2025 RFP Overview**
- **Grazing Units Overview**
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion discussion (Katie Gilmur)**
- **Questions and Answers**



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Conservation Grazing Program and Coastal Service Plan

- ❖ **District Mission Statement:** *To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, **protect and restore the natural environment**, and **provide opportunities** for ecologically sensitive **public enjoyment and education**.*
- ❖ **Coastal Service Plan and Mission Statement (2005):** *To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land **and agricultural land of regional significance**, protect and restore the natural environment, **preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources**, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education*



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Conservation Grazing Program and Coastal Service Plan

- Conservation Grazing Program 2007
 - Focused on protection and enhancement of biodiversity unique to our grasslands
 - Fuel Management
 - Supporting agriculture of the coastal service area



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**We live in a region that is globally
recognized as a biodiversity hotspot...**

**...and our grasslands are a critical part of that
natural heritage!**



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A Few Examples of Our Grassland Biodiversity



A disproportionately high number of rare or special status species in CA are associated with our grassland habitats.



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Conservation Grazing

Using grazing to meet conservation goals

What class of livestock?

How many?

For how long?

For what season?

Managing dispersal (riparian fencing, alternative water sources, supplements)

Monitoring



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How can grazing benefit native flora and fauna?

Maintaining open grassland habitat

Maintaining some areas with short-statured grassland

Maintaining aquatic features and associated vegetation structure

Moderating exotic annual grass competition and other invasive plant management



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Grazing as part of integrated resource management – striking a balance

No single approach will meet all resource management objectives

We have multiple goals

All approaches have trade offs



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2025 RFP Background

2007

Conservation
Grazing
Program
Established
(Big Dipper)

2008-10

Tunitas Creek
Elkus/Lobitos
Bluebrush
Canyon

2011-17

October Farm
Toto Ranch
Lone Madrone
Mindego Hill
Apple Orchard
Driscoll Ranch

2018-23

Cloverdale
Ranch (2023)
Gordon Ridge
Johnston
Ranch
South Cowell

November 2023

Ag Policy
Approved
by the
Board

Agricultural Policy – Policy AG-5

Structure agricultural leases to accomplish land management objectives and establish leases that promote conservation goals balanced with economically viable agricultural uses.



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2025 RFP Overview – RFP document access

- RFP documents are on District website (www.openspace.org)

“Get involved” → “Bid & Proposals”

- Be aware of posted addenda (48 hours)

Conservation Grazing RFP

For applicants interested in the District’s Request for Proposal (RFP) for Livestock Operator Leases on Conservation Grazing Lands, [please navigate here](#).

Additional information:

- [Grazing Unit Maps](#)
- [Grazing Lease Agreement](#)



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2025 RFP Overview – Timeline

<u>Action</u>	<u>Date</u>
Release of RFP	January 14
Mandatory Informational Meeting	February 20
RSVP for Individual Property Tours	March 6 th , 5pm
(Optional) Individual Property Tours	March 11 th and March 13 th
March 11: Johnston Ranch (8am), Lobitos Grazing Unit (11am), Butano Farms (3pm)	
March 13: Harrington (8am), Cloverdale Ranch (2pm)	
Deadline to Submit Questions	March 14
Answers to Questions	March 28
Proposal Submittal Date	<u>April 3, 3pm</u>
Highest-ranking proposers contacted to set up site visits	April 11
Interview/site visits	April 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, and 24
Selected Operator Signs Lease	May 1*
District Board of Directors Meeting to Award Lease	May 28*
Grazing Lease Term Begins	November 1, 2025

*Tentative Dates



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2025 RFP Overview – Critical reminders

- **Proposers may apply to multiple grazing units (up to 3) but must list those units in order of preference**
- **Selection will not be based on lowest bid; instead, a standard AUM fee is used for all leases (currently \$23.93/AUM, July 2024)**
- **Communication restrictions**
- **Collusion warning (Page 7)**
- **Proposals may be emailed, mailed, or hand-delivered and must be received 3pm Thursday, April 5th**
- **To be considered complete, proposal must include required elements as outlined in Attachment B**
- **Please closely review the Grazing Lease Agreement, Attachment C (Attachment B, 2.d)**
- **References but not reference letters**



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2025 RFP Overview – Selection Process

The selection process will follow five steps:

1. **Receive proposals (April 3)**
2. **Five-member panel will evaluate proposals and select the most highly qualified individuals or firms using the Evaluation Criteria (April 3-10).**
3. **Conduct interviews and a site visit to a ranch that the applicant is currently operating with the most qualified individuals or firms (Weeks of April 14 and 21).**
4. **Select the most qualified individual or firm based on the Evaluation Criteria and interviews/site visits (late April).**
5. **District Board of Directors consider approval of recommendations to award Grazing Lease(s) (~May).**

***All dates proposed or tentative**



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2025 RFP Overview – Selection Process

SECTION	SCORE (points)
1. Introduction	
a. Cover page	*
b. Table of Contents	*
2. Business Information	10 (Section total)
a. Statement of Experience	10
b. List of References	*
c. Financial Statement	*
d. Grazing Lease Agreement	*
3. Background & Technical Experience	40 (Section total)
a. Livestock Operating Experience	10
b. Managing Livestock Conflicts	10
c. Managing for Natural Resource Objectives	20
4. Operations and Employee Staffing	25 (Section Total)
a. Operational Plan	20
b. Employee Staffing Plan	5
5. Alignment with District Agricultural Policy (adopted November 2023)**	25 (Section Total)
a. Proposal furthers District policy goals on Environmental Sustainability	5
b. Proposal furthers District policy goals on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	5
c. Proposal furthers District policy goals on community outreach, education, and local food systems	5
d. Proposer lives in or operates a business in San Mateo County	5
e. Proposer is currently a District tenant in good standing	5
Total Score Without Oral Interview/Site Visit (sum of Sections 2-5)	100

*Indicates pass/fail section; should section be missing or incomplete, proposal may not be eligible for further evaluation.

- Evaluation Criteria (Page 9)
- District Agricultural Policy (adopted Nov 2023)



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2025 RFP Overview – Proposal Submissions

- **Individuals or firms shall prepare and submit a proposal in the format outlined in Attachment B (Page 19 in RFP document)**
- **In proposal formatting, list out and maintain the section and sub-section structure when answering questions/prompts.**
- **All proposals shall be type-written using 12-point font on standard 8 ½ x 11 paper.**
- **Page limitations are listed below by section and shall not be exceeded; however, applicants should not feel obligated to meet the maximum allowed.**
- **Succinct, topical, and clear proposals will be scored favorably.**



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2025 RFP Overview

Questions?



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Grazing Units Overview



Johnston Ranch



Lobitos



Harrington



Butano Farms

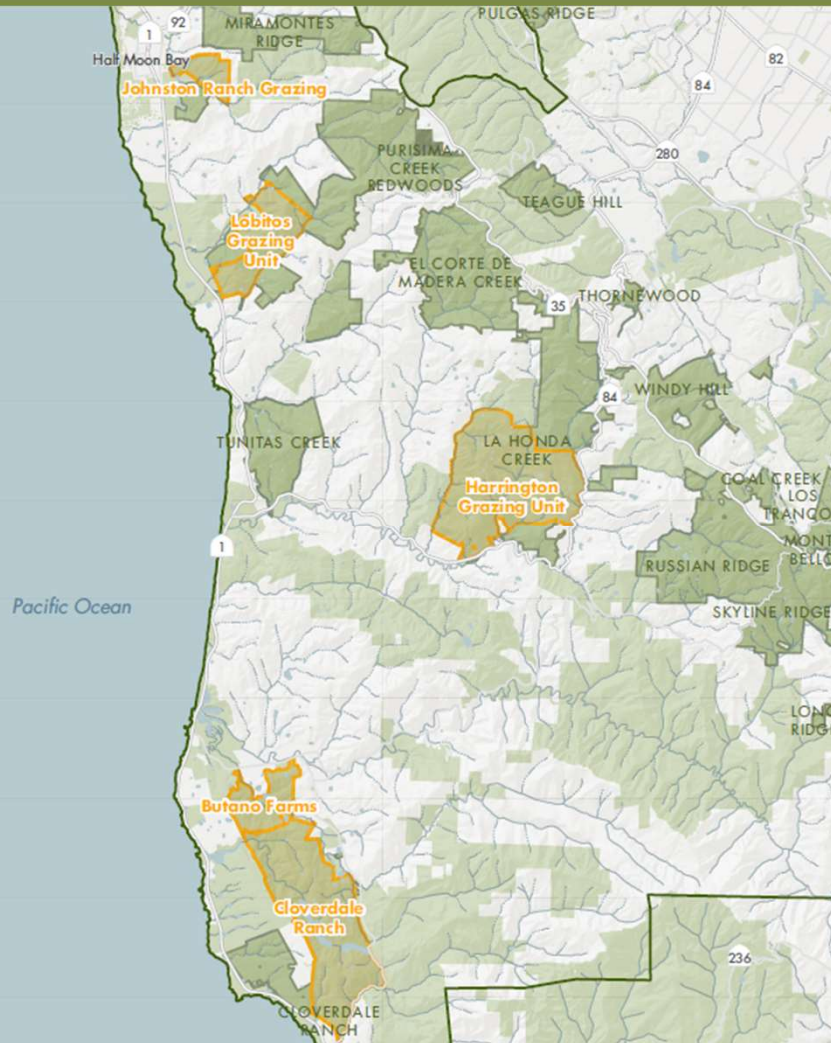


Cloverdale Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview



Regional map of grazing units



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Grazing Units Overview – Johnston Ranch

- **Location:** approximately one (1) mile east of the City of Half Moon Bay on Higgins Canyon Road
- **Size:** approximately 412 acres considered suitable for grazing
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 366 Animal Unit Months (AUMs, equivalent to 31 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** currently seasonally grazed (mid-Summer through mid-Winter) as a single unit by a grazing tenant but can be grazed either seasonally or year-round, depending on operational needs, resource management considerations, and livestock water availability, among other factors



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Grazing Units Overview – Johnston Ranch

- **Fencing:** Perimeter fencing is present on the property; currently no functional cross fencing
- **Stock water:** one pond and one spring provide stock water year round; stock water availability can become marginal during drought years; a project is currently underway that, if completed, would improve the reliability of year-round stockwater
- **Other infrastructure:** One small corral in barnyard area allows for shipping and receiving of livestock; barn is available for storage
- **Predation:** No predation events have been documented or confirmed in recent years, but mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Public access:** None currently but there may be in the future

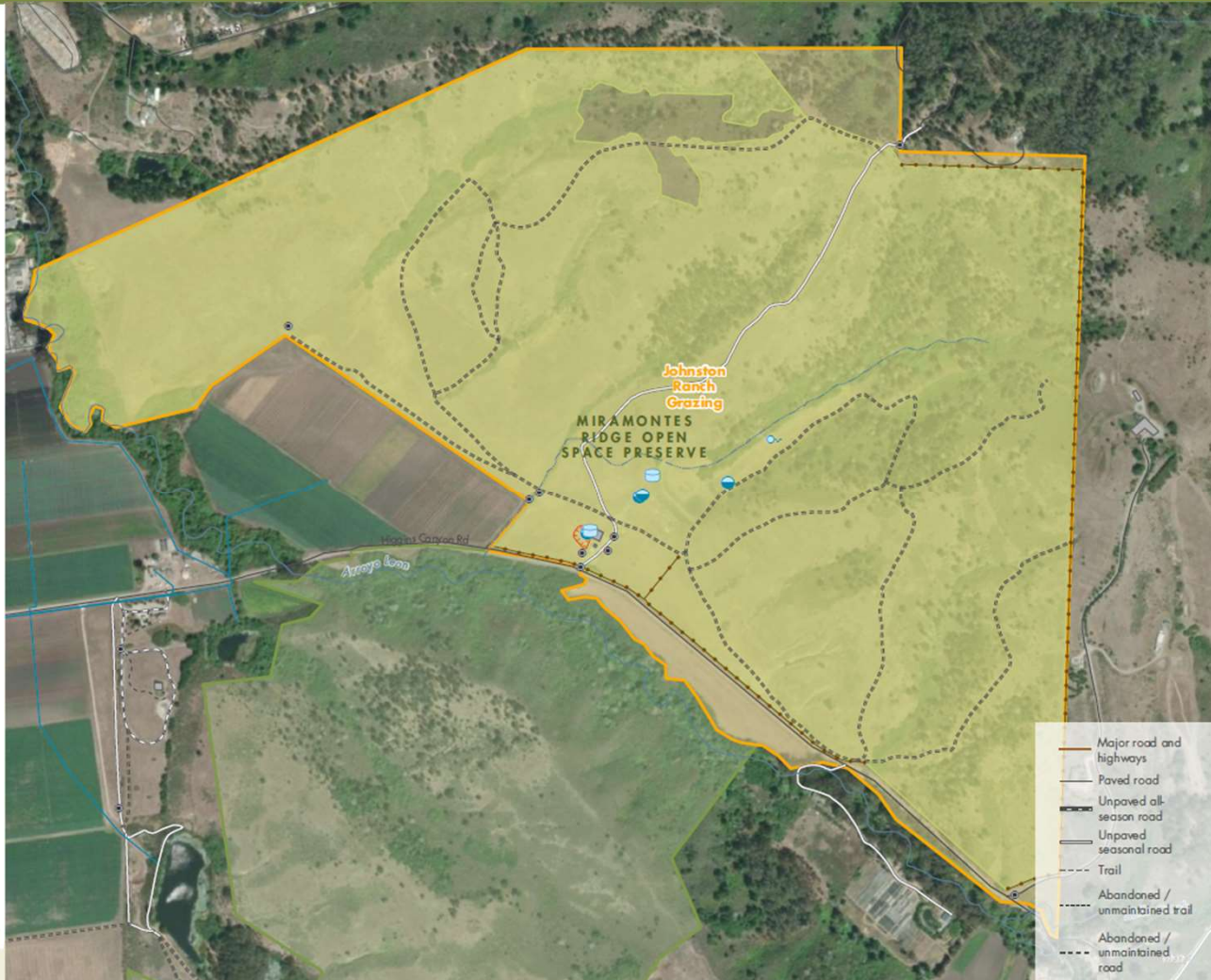


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Grazing Units Overview – Johnston Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview – Johnston Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview – Johnston Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview – Johnston Ranch

Natural resource values

- Remnant native grassland vegetation
- Special status plants
- Special status animals
- Pond habitat
- Proximity to Arroyo de Leon

Natural resource challenges

- High rates of brush encroachment
- Invasive plants
- Livestock distribution



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Grazing Units Overview – Lobitos

- **Location:** between Purisima and Lobitos Creeks, approximately 0.5 miles east of Highway 1, in coastal San Mateo County
- **Size:** approximately 1,210 acres with approximately 933 acres considered suitable for grazing divided into four (4) pastures.
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 863.0 AUMs (equivalent to 72 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** grazed year-round with pasture rotation



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Grazing Units Overview – Lobitos

- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the four pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** combination of springs and ponds; new ridgeline water system installed Fall/Winter 2024/2025 should improve water availability and distribution; amount of water availability may limit pasture use during dry season
- **Other infrastructure:** corral along Verde Road serves as primary location for processing and shipping/receiving of livestock
- **Predation:** Loss of livestock to predation has occurred and been documented in recent years; both mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Public access:** None currently but expected in Fall 2029

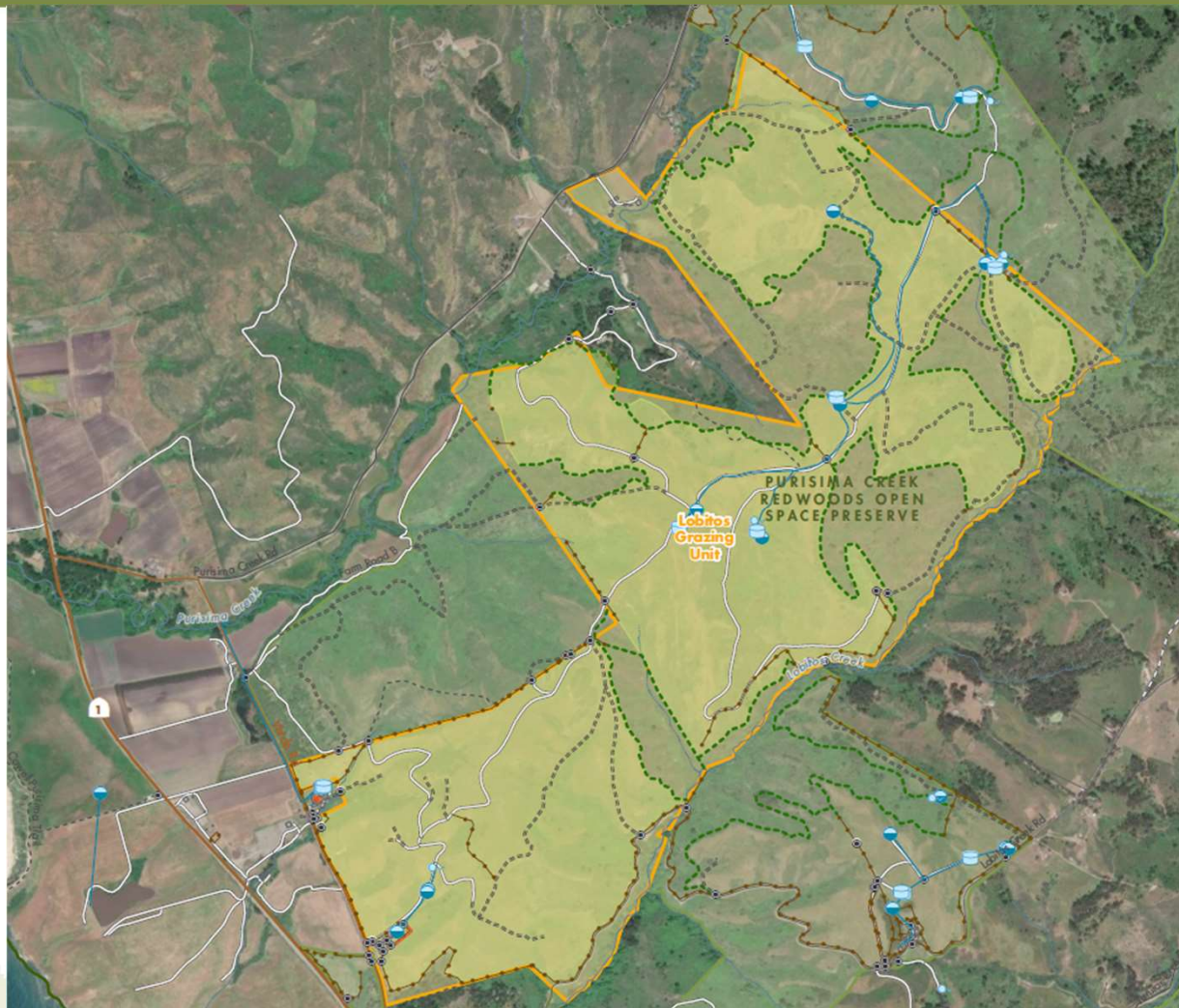


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Grazing Units Overview – Lobitos



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Grazing Units Overview – Lobitos



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Grazing Units Overview – Lobitos



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Grazing Units Overview – Lobitos

Natural resource values

- Native grassland vegetation
- Special status plants
- Special status wildlife
- Purisima and Lobitos Creeks

Natural resource challenges

- Invasive species
- High rates of brush encroachment
- Sediment loading in Lobitos Creek



Grazing Units Overview – Harrington

- **Location:** located along Highway 84 north of the town of La Honda in San Mateo County; bordered by Lone Madrone Grazing Unit to the east
- **Size:** approximately 3,595 acres with approximately 2,611 acres considered suitable for grazing divided into twelve (12) pastures.
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 2016.0 AUMs (equivalent to 168 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** grazed year-round with pasture rotation



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Grazing Units Overview – Harrington

- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the twelve pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** water source is a combination of springs, ponds, and creek diversion; amount of water availability may limit use during dry season in some pastures
- **Other infrastructure:** three (3) corrals provide adequate access for cattle processing and shipping/receiving; barns are available for storage; residence is available for agricultural employee of the operation and included as part of the grazing lease
- **Predation:** Loss of livestock to predation has occurred and been documented in recent years; both mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Public access:** hiking and equestrian access is present through grazing area; seasonal leashed dog access

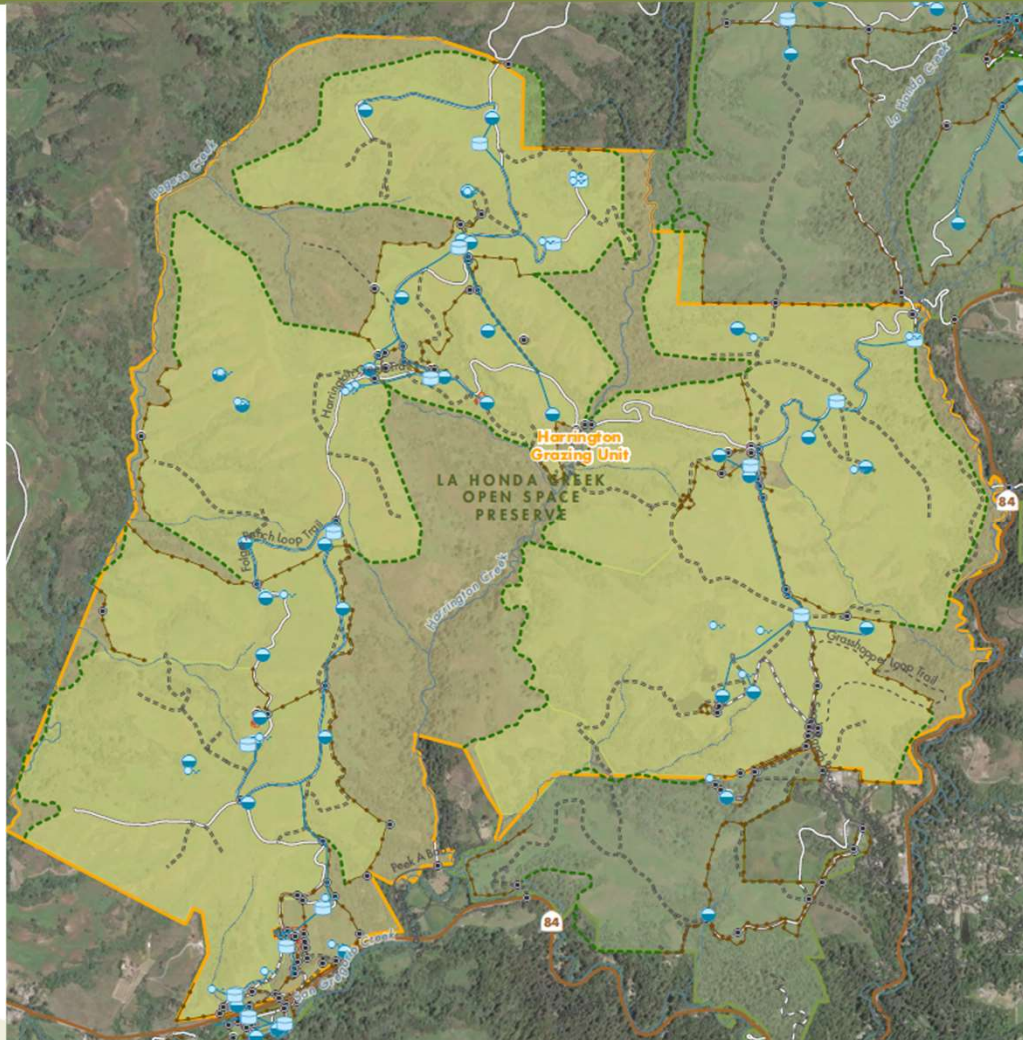


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Grazing Units Overview – Harrington



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Grazing Units Overview – Harrington



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Grazing Units Overview – Harrington



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Grazing Units Overview – Harrington

Natural resource values

- Native grassland vegetation
- Special status plants
- Special status wildlife
- Bogess, Harrington, and Purisima Creeks



Natural resource challenges

- Invasive plants
- Brush encroachment



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Grazing Units Overview – Butano Farms

- **Location:** located south of the town of Pescadero in San Mateo County; there are two noncontiguous areas that comprise the grazing unit; western area is accessed from Bean Hollow Road; eastern area is accessed from Pescadero Creek Road
- **Size:** The western lease area (“High Hill”) totals approximately 198 acres, all of which is considered suitable for grazing. The eastern unit lease area (“Lemonade Stand”) totals 245 acres, all of which is considered suitable for grazing
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 551.5 AUMs (equivalent to 46.0 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** year-round grazing



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Grazing Units Overview – Butano Farms

- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some fencing
- **Stock water:** water source is a combination of springs and ponds
- **Other infrastructure:** western and eastern areas each have a corral; western corral is new and allows for shipping, receiving, and processing of cattle; eastern corral is in marginal condition and only allows for shipping and receiving
- **Predation:** No predation events have been documented or confirmed in recent years, but mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Public access:** some public access through docent-led tours; potential for expanded public access in near future

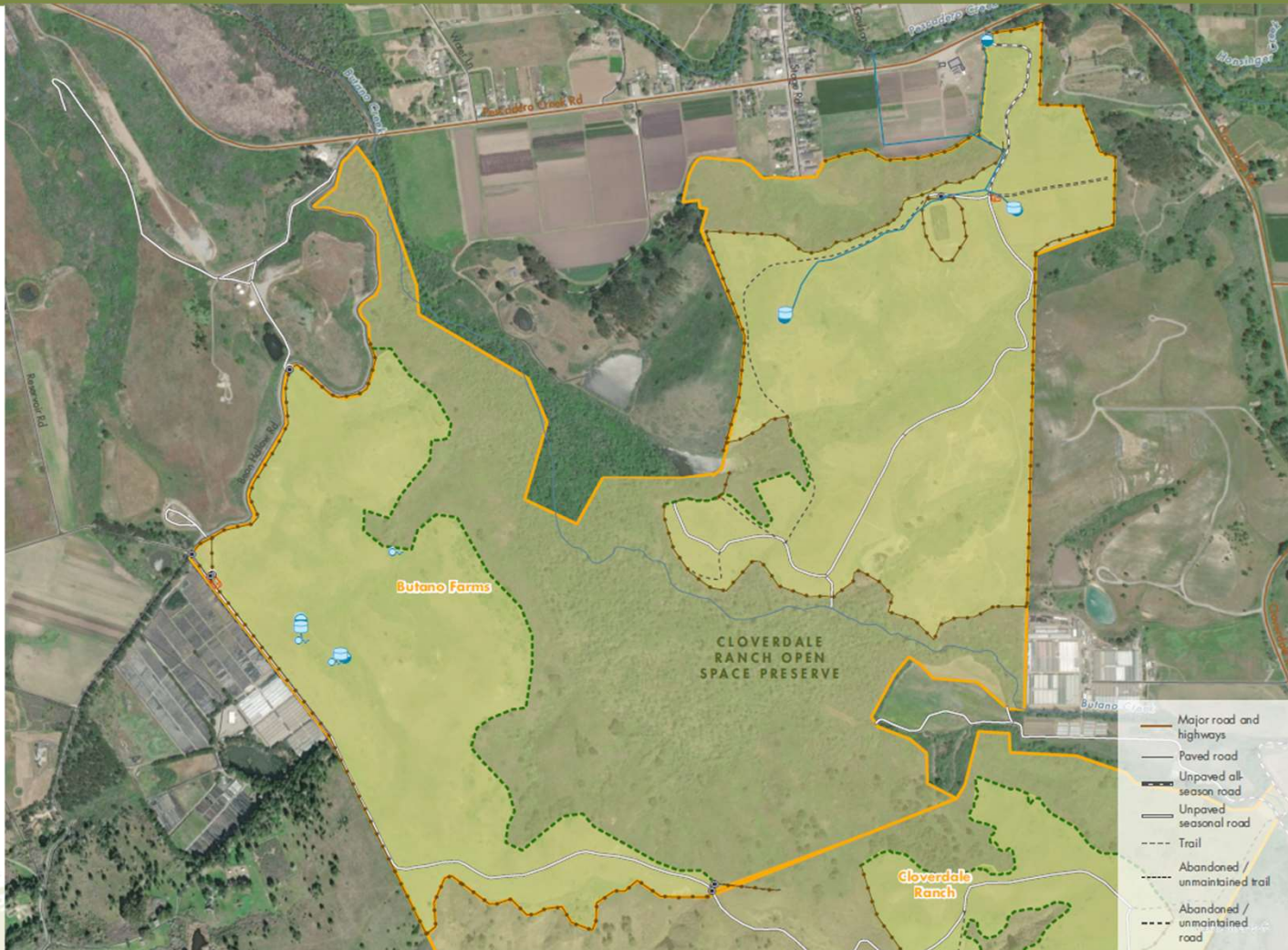


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Grazing Units Overview – Butano Farms



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Grazing Units Overview – Butano Farms



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Grazing Units Overview – Butano Farms



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Grazing Units Overview – Butano Farms

Natural resource values

- Native grassland vegetation
- Special status plants
- Special status animals
- Arroyo de los Frijoles, Butano Creek, Pescadero Creek

Natural resource challenges

- Invasive plants
- Brush encroachment



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Grazing Units Overview – Cloverdale Ranch

- **Location:** located south of the town of Pescadero in San Mateo County; ranch is bounded to the west by Highway 1, to the east by Cloverdale Ranch Road, and to the south by Gazos Creek Road
- **Size:** approximately 3,375 acres with approximately 1,095 acres considered suitable for grazing divided into nineteen (19) pastures.
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 1250.6 AUMs (equivalent to 105.0 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** grazed year-round with pasture rotation



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Grazing Units Overview – Cloverdale Ranch

- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the nineteen pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** water source is a combination of springs, ponds, and wells; amount of water availability may limit use during dry season in some pastures
- **Other infrastructure:** two corrals are available; Holm Ranch corral allows for shipping/receiving cattle; Goat Ranch corral allows for shipping, receiving, and processing; pole barn is available for storage
- **Predation:** No predation events have been documented or confirmed in recent years, but mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Public access:** currently no public access although frequent access from special groups and researchers



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Grazing Units Overview – Cloverdale Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview – Cloverdale Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview – Cloverdale Ranch



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Grazing Units Overview – Cloverdale Ranch

Natural resource values

- Native grassland vegetation
- Special status plants
- Special status animals
- Arroyo de los Frijoles, Butano Creek, Pescadero Creek



Matt Sharp-Chaney



Charles Russel - CalFlora

Natural resource challenges

- Invasive plants
- Brush encroachment



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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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As a part of our ongoing mission to provide inclusive, equitable services to our communities, Midpen is eager to work with partners who are addressing systemic barriers to access and equity. We are particularly interested in partnering with operators that either currently have DEI initiatives in place or are working to establish DEI initiatives.

In California, 92% of farmworkers are Latino/Latina/Latine, while only 3% are farm owners. In the US at large, only 3.3% of producers identified as Hispanic, Latino or Spanish, and only 2.3% as American Indian or Alaska Native, despite holding vast amounts of knowledge around agriculture practices.



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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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We are looking for:

- Partners who currently are or plan to advance DEI within their organization and programs.
 - Examples might include ownership by groups that have been historically underrepresented in ranching or hiring from diverse candidate pools
- Partners who currently or plan to address disparities and inequities in access to resources and opportunities
 - Examples might include food access for local communities, or mentorship programs for those in historically underrepresented populations
- Partners who currently or plan to collaborate with diverse communities, including those who have been historically marginalized.
 - Examples might include partnerships with local food organizations or businesses owned by people historically underrepresented communities.



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