



COUNTY OF MARIN
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
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June 24, 2008

Board of Directors
Marin County Open Space District
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, California 94903

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009 OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
BUDGET**

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open the public hearing on the Open Space District's proposed fiscal year 2008-2009 budget and accept public comment.
2. Close the public hearing.
3. Approve the proposed fiscal year 2008-2009 Open Space District budget with revisions determined appropriate by your Board.

DISCUSSION:

The Open Space District is ending fiscal year 07-08 with an impressive list of accomplishments, including:

- ✓ Completed a first-ever Strategic Plan, which includes a Land Conservation Plan – another first – to guide the District's land conservation efforts for the next 20 years.
- ✓ Completed an Open Space Capital Improvement Plan, identifying critical projects necessary to raise the level of stewardship system-wide and in individual open space preserves.
- ✓ Assisted the creation of MOST – the Marin Open Space Trust – a not for profit public benefit corporation whose purpose is to raise funds for open space preservation.
- ✓ Created a Volunteer Coordinator position and a Superintendent of Capital Projects position, to increase volunteer stewardship opportunities and to grow our capacity to undertake capital improvement projects.
- ✓ Grew participation in the Volunteer Program to a level far exceeding targets in the 07-08 Performance Plan, and engaged an unprecedented number of children and adults in a variety of stewardship projects.

- ✓ Completed a system-wide vegetation inventory, an essential tool to inform land management decision making related to habitat reclamation and fire hazard reduction.
- ✓ Collaborated with the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to produce a community supported plan to restore Bolinas Lagoon.
- ✓ Treated 85 acres infested with non-native plants to reclaim native habitat
- ✓ Completed the 1.0 mile Bahia Trail Reroute Project.
- ✓ Completed Phase 2 of the Cascade Canyon Vegetation Management Project.
- ✓ Preserved 92 acres (Gonzales Property) near Roy's Redwoods Open Space Preserve by means of a conservation easement.
- ✓ Closed a short but significant gap in the County trail system with acquisition of a trail easement through the Lessin Property in Baltimore Canyon.

FY 08-09 Budget Highlights

This is an exciting year for the Open Space District as it takes the first steps to implement the new Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan. Staff's development of the recommended budget, with total expenditures of \$6,722,033 excluding reserve and contingency, was guided by the Strategic Plan's goals and one year action plan as well as the Parks and Open Space Department's FY 08-09 Performance Plan, the new Land Conservation Plan, and the Open Space Capital Improvement Plan.

The Open Space District's fiscal year (FY) 2008-2009 budget is attached as Exhibit A. Highlights of the proposed budget include:

- ***Taking Good Care of Our Lands***
 - We are growing our capacity to ensure appropriate use of District lands with the **addition of a 1.0 FTE Sheriff's Deputy** to patrol open space preserves and educate visitors. This position, representing a new expenditure of \$154,065, would be contracted from the Sheriff's Department and raise to two the number of Sheriff's Deputies on the Open Space District's staff.
 - We will, with Board approval, develop a comprehensive Resource Management Plan and begin its first phase, a **Vegetation Management Plan**, that will guide control of invasive plant species and work related to habitat enhancement and fire hazard reduction.
 - We will undertake grant-funded sediment reduction projects on roads and trails in the San Geronimo Creek watershed to protect fish habitat, and partner with the Department of Public Works on a road and trail assessment to identify sediment sources in the Miller Creek watershed. These projects will **improve fisheries habitat and the overall health of streams** on District lands.

- We will implement the first phase of the Ring Mountain Habitat Enhancement Plan to **reclaim habitat** for that preserve's **rare and endangered plants**.
- ***Growing Our Open Space System***

While no funding has been specifically allocated for **land acquisition**, the Open Space Planning and Acquisition Program will continue to pursue preservation of lands listed in the Land Conservation Plan in order to meet its FY 08-09 Performance Plan targets. According to the Strategic Plan, additional lands to be preserved amount to 15,000 acres. Funding for acquisitions in 08-09 will rely largely on grant funding and contributions from partners. These sources could be supplemented by a portion of the District's budget set aside for contingencies.
- ***Expanding Our Capacity to Undertake Capital Projects***

The budget reflects an allocation of \$151,956 for a new Capital Projects Program that was established in FY 07-08. Resources and staff were shifted from several existing programs to create this new program and, as a consequence, no new funding or positions were required. This program will implement projects that include **road, trail, creek and drainage repairs, open space accessibility improvements, capital improvements at the Lucas Valley field office**.
- ***Exercising Fiscal Responsibility in a Time of County Expenditure Reductions***
 - This is the first year that the District has identified a baseline budget, amounting to \$5,312,255 by distinguishing ongoing costs from one time and discretionary expenses. Baseline expenditures equal the District's baseline revenues from property taxes and other ongoing revenue sources. One time and discretionary expenses, including many capital and resource management projects, are now listed within a "Special Projects" heading totaling \$1,909,778.
 - The overall budget, minus contingency, represents an expenditure increase of \$623,334 compared to FY 07-08. The increase is largely offset by a \$207,373 grant and a \$200,304 one-time excess ERAF refund.
 - The District's budget also includes an expenditure of \$500,000 that will be set aside as a self insurance reserve for unanticipated expenses such as emergency land repairs. If unspent, funding in this account would not carry over or be available for rebudgeting in FY 09-10, unlike remaining contingency funds.
- ***Taking Action to Meet Future Funding Needs***

Implementing the Strategic Plan as it applies to the Open Space District will require a substantial financial investment. The estimated cost of completing our Land Conservation Plan is \$146.7 million, while the cost of implementing

the Open Space Capital Improvement Plan is estimated at \$33.4 million. During FY 08-09 staff will continue to identify and secure the necessary funding from multiple sources. Foremost among them is a proposed ¼ cent sales tax that would raise \$100 million for the Parks and Open Space Department over the Strategic Plan's 20 year planning horizon. Other funding sources that the Department will explore include grants, assessments, donations and support from the Marin Open Space Trust.

Summary of Core Programs and Budgets

Program	Staff	Total Program Expenditures
Planning and Acquisition Program responsibilities: Long-range open space preservation planning; land and trail acquisition; planning related to the management of natural resources and public use; and reviewing planning and development proposals affecting open space and trails interests.	3.0 FTE	\$790,977
Maintenance and Operations Program responsibilities: Installing, building, and/or maintaining facilities (including fuel breaks, drains, signs, trails, and fences); managing public use of District lands by educating open space visitors and enforcing the District Code; and monitoring land conditions and natural resources.	17.0 FTE	\$2,458,306
Resource Management Program responsibilities: Preparing inventories of non-native plants, special status species, and other resources; developing, assembling funding for, and implementing erosion control, exotic plant control, habitat improvement, and other resource protection projects; and responding to resource management questions.	2.0 FTE	\$439,821
Capital Projects Program responsibilities: Developing and implementing the Open Space Capital Improvement Plan; overseeing design development and preparation of bid documents; coordinating bidding process, monitoring project progress and budgets.	1.0 FTE	\$151,956

Environmental Education	1.0 FTE	\$147,487
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Program responsibilities: Providing educational outings by the District's naturalist and guest naturalists; preparing educational media; responding to public inquiries; assisting with the development of resource enhancement projects; and training Open Space rangers in interpretive techniques.

Volunteer	1.0 FTE	\$162,841
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Program responsibilities: Recruiting new volunteers and retaining existing, active volunteers; planning and overseeing volunteer training and recognition events; overseeing six volunteer programs; coordinating the selection of volunteer projects; and preparing and distributing the Volunteer newsletter.

Administration	5.75 FTE	\$2,318,655
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Program responsibilities: Leading the District and achieving strategic goals in partnership with the Board and the Parks and Open Space Commission; administering the District on a day-to-day basis; and developing the budget. Budget includes administrative services staff, certain expenditures shared by all programs, and a \$500,000 set aside in a self insurance reserve for unanticipated expenses

Baseline Total		\$5,312,255
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Special Projects (Not a program)	n/a	\$1,909,778
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Contingency (Not a program)	n/a	\$1,157,790
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Total	30.75 FTE	\$8,379,823
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FISCAL IMPACT: The Open Space District anticipates revenues and carryover totaling \$8,379,823, and expenditures, including a \$500,000 allocation in a reserve account, amounting to \$7,222,033 in FY 2008-2009. The remaining unallocated fund balance of \$1,157,790 would be available as a contingency.

The Open Space District is not funded by the County General Fund. The District's main source of operating revenue comes from annual property taxes. The Open Space District's portion of all property tax revenues collected annually in Marin County is approximately 1%.

APPROVED BY:

<input type="checkbox"/> Auditor-Controller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon McNamee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sharon" being more prominent than the last name "McNamee".

Sharon McNamee
General Manager

SM:RM:kbl
attachments

c: Matthew Hymel
Matt Bronson
Richard Arrow
Ronald Miska
Ron Paolini
Yvonne Zupkow
Brian Sanford
Chris Bramham
Mischon Martin
David Herlocker
Greg Reza
Parks and Open Space Commission
Press