



September 23, 2008

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

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ADOPT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
FRAMEWORK FOR OPEN SPACE DISTRICT LANDS**

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt the proposed Resource Management Framework, subject to any changes your Board deems necessary.

SUMMARY: Over the last 35 years, the Open Space District has focused on the acquisition and permanent protection of land – open space lands that provide the public with many benefits. Among them are quality of life attributes, beauty and inspiration, clean air, places to walk, run, hike, and ride a bicycle or a horse, and a place to find peace and quiet. In addition, these places provide habitat for many native plants and animals; and in many cases, the last remaining critical habitats can be found on OSD lands in Marin.

The OSD is now at a critical juncture in its role as a land and resource manager. We must develop a roadmap for achieving land protection goals, and determining management strategies for the long-term protection and enhancement of natural resources as well as public use. As a consequence, staff of the Parks and Open Space Department has prepared the first ever Resource Management Framework for Open Space District lands. This framework will guide the stewardship of open space in such a way as to achieve balance between protecting resources and accommodating public use now and into the future.

The Resource Management Framework, attached as Exhibit A, is an outline of a high level Resource Management Plan (RMP) that would guide the future management and stewardship of Open Space Preserves. The same RMP could also apply to

County parks, with allowance for their recreational focus. The preparation and implementation of a RMP is consistent with Goal 1 of the Department's Strategic Plan, which is to ***protect and restore our lands***.

The Framework describes a comprehensive Resource Management Plan consisting of the following elements:

- ***Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan*** that will address issues critical to conservation and enhancement of natural communities, restoration of native species populations and reduction of fire hazard conditions, while limiting the encroachment of invasive plant species;
- ***Road and Trail Management Plan*** that will address issues related to the location, condition, maintenance, and visitor use of roads and trails, and would be coordinated with watershed planning being conducted by the Department of Public Works;
- ***Carbon Management Feasibility Study*** that will explore how the Department can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions consistent with State goals, and the role of the County's park and open space lands in the emerging practice of carbon sequestration.
- ***Cultural and Geological Resource Management Plan*** that will address issues related to the location, protection, and potential interpretation of cultural and geological resources.

The first two plans would yield scientifically sound land management data, GIS maps and policy guidance based on the District's recently completed digital vegetation maps, recent invasive species control research and proposed road and trail assessments and studies. All plans will enable well-informed land management decision-making on the part of your Board, the Parks and Open Space Commission, staff and the community.

The Department would engage technical experts, other County Departments and public agencies, local neighbors and community groups, user groups, and volunteers over the course of developing these plans. The plans would be developed as illustrated in the attached workplan outline. Staff anticipates completion of all four elements of the RMP by October 2010 as outlined in Exhibit B, Workplan Schedule, assuming the timely availability of funding. Upon the Board's adoption of the framework, staff is prepared to begin development of the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan.

At its meeting of July 10, the Parks and Open Space Commission recommended your Board's adoption of the Resource Management Framework.

FISCAL IMPACT: No direct impact. Adoption of the Resource Management Framework does not commit the Board to any cost.

REVIEWED 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,

Sharon McNamee
General Manager

Attachments

cc: Ron Miska
Matt Bronson
Mischon Martin
Elise Holland
Parks and Open Space Commission
Press