



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 2/25/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Regional Parks

Staff Name and Phone Number: Steve Ehret (707)565-1107

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): 5th

Title:

Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion Wildlife Conservation Board grant application

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Director of Regional Parks to apply for the Wildlife Conservation Board acquisition grant in the amount of \$8 million to acquire Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion property and to execute all documents which may be necessary to carry out and administer the grant.

Executive Summary:

Regional Parks is seeking \$8 million for the Wildlife Conservation Board to contribute to the Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion acquisition project (Project). This Project is in partnership with Save the Redwoods League, Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, and Sonoma Land Trust, together securing a proposed \$24 million to acquire this 1,517-acre property as an expansion to the existing Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve (Park and Preserve).

Discussion:

Regional Parks requests support from the Board of Supervisors (Board) to apply for \$8 million from the Wildlife Conservation Board to acquire 1,517 acres adjacent to the Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. This project would expand the Park and Preserve for public access and for land and water habitat corridor protection.

The Monte Rio Redwoods expansion (Property) is forested property in the rural Russian River area of western Sonoma County, just south of the community of Monte Rio and Duncans Mills. The Property is currently being used for timber production and for private recreational mountain biking by a local club.

The Property has significant natural resources and potential for public recreational opportunities, featuring a highly visible redwood and Douglas fir forest, the headwaters of several important Coho salmon and steelhead trout spawning streams that serve as tributaries to the Russian River (Dutch Bill Creek, Freezeout Creek, and Willow Creek). The Property is adjacent to California state parks, regional parks, and Ag + Open Space protected lands on much of its border and its protection would create a contiguous protected area of over 10,000 acres.

The Property is currently owned by Mendocino Redwood Company. Save the Redwoods League has entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase and would transfer the Property to Regional Parks this spring

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or early summer (2025). Save the Redwoods League has a unique ability to navigate complex issues with large commercial timber companies and to close the transaction in a limited period of time.

Acquisition is currently valued at \$24 million. Along with Wildlife Conservation Board, identified Project funders currently include Save the Redwoods League, Sonoma Land Trust, Ag + Open Space, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and private donors.

Wildlife Conservation Board requires a resolution approving the application for grant funds. This resolution also designates the Director of Regional Parks to execute all documents that may be necessary to carry out and administer grant funds. If awarded, this competitive grant could be awarded this spring or early summer.

Regional Parks will return to the Board with additional property and management information for consideration before acquisition.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

August 18, 2020: accepted fee title to the 515-acre Torr Property in the Dutch Bill Creek watershed for a future regional park and open space preserve.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There is no fiscal impact to approving this grant application. If the grant application is approved this funding and the related expenditures will be included in either the FY 2024-2025 budget during consolidated budget adjustments or the FY 2025-2026 budget depending upon grant approval timing.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Resolution

Map

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None