



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 4/15/2025

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

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

Staff Name and Phone Number: Steve Ehret, 707-565-2041

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Fifth

Title:

Notice of Intent to Acquire approximately 1,517 acres, located south of the community of Monte Rio and northwest of the community of Occidental, to incorporate into Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Preserve

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution which:

- A) Declares the Board's intention to purchase approximately 1,517 acres located south of the community of Monte Rio and northwest of the community of Occidental ("Property"), to incorporate into Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Preserve;
- B) Schedules 9:00 a.m. on May 6, 2025, as the time when the Board of Supervisors will consider the authorization of the purchase; and
- C) Directs the Clerk to publish the Notice of Intent pursuant to Cal. Gov. Code Sects. 25350 and 6063.

Executive Summary:

Pursuant to Cal. Gov. Code Sections 25350 and 6063, Regional Parks seeks Board of Supervisors authority to publish a notice of intention to purchase the Property adjacent to Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. This acquisition project is in partnership with Save the Redwoods League, Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, and Sonoma Land Trust, together securing an estimated \$24 million to acquire this Property as an expansion to the existing Monte Rio Redwoods Park and Preserve.

Discussion:

The Property is located between the 550-acre Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve (Park and Preserve) and the Willow Creek unit of Sonoma Coast State Park. The forested land is in the rural Russian River area of western Sonoma County, just south of the community of Monte Rio and Duncans Mills. The Property has significant natural resources and potential for public recreation opportunities and holds the largest remaining unprotected acreage of redwoods in Sonoma County south of the Russian River. The Property is currently being used for timber production and for private recreational mountain biking by a local club. Acquiring this Property with its highly visible redwood and Douglas fir forest and the headwaters of several important coho salmon and steelhead trout spawning stream tributaries to the Russian River would create a contiguous protected area of over 10,000 acres. The permanent protection of the vast resources on this Property for the benefit of the public is a unique opportunity.

Save the Redwoods League, Sonoma County Ag + Open Space, Sonoma Land Trust, and Regional Parks are

collaborating to complete this significant acquisition project. The current estimated value of the Property is \$24 million. Identified funders currently include Save the Redwoods League, Ag + Open Space, Wildlife Conservation Board, Sonoma Land Trust, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and private donors.

This acquisition will be completed in two steps. To meet requested closing deadlines, Save the Redwoods League is under contract with Mendocino Redwood Company to acquire the property by June 2025 for \$24 million. Including funding from Sonoma Land Trust, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and private donors, Save the Redwoods League is contributing \$8 million to the purchase and plans to transfer the Property to the County in June 2025 or earlier, once the anticipated \$8 million in funding from Ag + Open Space and \$8 million in funding from Wildlife Conservation Board, is confirmed. For the second step, Regional Parks will enter into a purchase agreement with Save the Redwoods League to purchase the 1,517-acre subject property for an estimated remaining purchase price of \$16,000,000.

Regional Parks intends to appear before the Board of Supervisors on May 6, 2025, to seek authorization to purchase the 1,517-acre Property, which will be financed with funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board and Ag + Open Space District. At that time, Regional Parks will propose an approach to addressing interim and ongoing access and operational costs and process. As background, Regional Parks already provides operation and maintenance for the existing Monte Rio Redwoods Park and Preserve. For the expansion Property, we will be working closely with volunteer groups and other community organizations to maintain what is existing. Ongoing operational and maintenance costs are not expected to significantly increase.

Closing is proposed to take place on or before June 20, 2025. In the meantime, Regional Parks in partnership with Ag + Open Space and Save the Redwoods League will be conducting a series of due diligence investigations including a boundary survey, insurance considerations and securing the final grants necessary to acquire the property. The Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment for the Property has been completed by Save the Redwoods League and provided to Regional Parks. For additional Property information, Regional Parks recommends completing boundary survey work to verify property corners and key boundary locations. This work is estimated to cost \$35,000, and Parks for All Measure M funding is available in the Dutch Bill Creek capital project budget. Survey consulting services are available through Regional Parks' as-needed agreements.

California Government Code Section 25350 requires that the Board of Supervisors publish a notice of its intention to purchase property for park purposes prior to authorizing the acquisition. The notice must contain a description of the property proposed to be purchased, the price, the seller, and a statement of the day and time the Board will meet to authorize the purchase. This notice is to be published in a local newspaper once a week for three successive weeks all prior to the May 6, 2025, Board of Supervisors meeting. The proposed language for this notice is an attachment to this Summary Report.

Regional Parks requests the Board's authority to publish a Notice of Intent of County to Purchase Real Property pursuant to California Government Code Section 25350 and 6063.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

February 25, 2025, by Resolution No. 25-0123 authorized application for the \$8 million Wildlife Conservation Board grant for Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion acquisition.

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7143855&GUID=65C3F2A8-5BAB-49E9-8824-78207773CD18&Options=&Search=>>

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.

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4616591&GUID=3744EFDD-E9DA-47B1-A6B4-C19E6042585B&Options=&Search=>>

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$35,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$35,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$35,000		
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$35,000		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

While the publication of the Notice of Intent will have no fiscal impacts, due diligence boundary survey work will be completed by Regional Parks with Dutch Bill Creek capital project funding. Wildlife Conservation Board grant and Ag + Open Space District funding is being secured for this acquisition. Regional Parks will return to the Board with a specific funding proposal for operation and management.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Resolution

Notice of Intent

Map

Agenda Date: 4/15/2025

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

Property Purchase Agreement