
USE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

To: Use and Management Committee
Date: November 14, 2019
From: Lucas Shellhammer, Senior Open Space Planner
RE: Overview of Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access Planning

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) received an award of funding approval from the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation on November 10, 2014 for \$1,400,000 towards the purchase of the 1,831-acre United Technologies Corporation Coyote Ridge Property, now known as the Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve (Preserve). On June 3, 2015, the Moore Foundation modified the agreement to reallocate the Foundation's grant to support \$1,000,000 towards acquisition expenses and \$400,000 towards public access improvements. The Authority applied the Moore Foundation's grant of \$1,000,000 toward the purchase of the 1,831-acre property in October 2015.

The successful acquisition of Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve provides permanent protection to one of the most significant wildlife habitat areas in the Bay Area. The Preserve is of exceptional conservation value in due to its extensive serpentine grassland habitat which is suitable for rare, threatened, and endangered wildlife species such as the threatened Bay checkerspot butterfly and serpentine-endemic wildflowers including the endangered Metcalf Canyon Jewelflower. The Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Management and Monitoring Plan (Plan), prepared in coordination with the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency and finalized in January 2019, guides future land management of the property and identifies short- and long-term priority land management actions. This Plan serves as a management framework to assist with public access planning and to minimize impacts to sensitive habitats.

The Use and Management Committee was last updated by Staff regarding the Public Access Improvements project in October 2017. At that time the Committee was provided project context, background, and schedule for analysis and feasibility studies.

DISCUSSION

The Authority's environmental consultants, including Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting and Basin Research Associates, have completed preliminary inventory and analysis including biological and cultural resource surveys, respectively. Additionally, Cross Land Surveying has prepared a topographic survey of the Malech Road parcel. Based on review of survey findings and field evaluation, Staff has identified potential locations suitable for public access improvements.

The Authority is currently working with landscape architecture firm, Restoration Design Group (RDG), to provide conceptual site design alternatives for public access improvements. Proposed Phase One improvements include a central gathering place for preserve visitors at the Malech Road parking and

staging area, rehabilitation of existing ranch roads and creation of new trails, and development of trail amenities including rest areas and overlooks with opportunities for education and interpretation. Public access features would integrate well-designed and compact “light on the land” layouts to minimize grading and disturbance to natural resources. Staff is currently in the process of reviewing and providing comments on site analysis and draft conceptual design alternatives for the Preserve.

The meeting will begin with a presentation at the Open Space Authority Administrative Office (33 Las Colinas Lane, San Jose, CA 95119) where Staff will provide updates on planning and design for proposed public access improvements at Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve. Following the presentation, staff invites the Use and Management Committee and members of the public on a field visit to discuss public access planning and design.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is informational only and no action is required.