

# RENEWAL



2019 UPDATE

*to the*

Napa Open Space District 2008 Master Plan



**NAPA** COUNTY REGIONAL PARK &  
**OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

# Background

The Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District (commonly referred to as the Napa Open Space District) was approved by the voters in 2006 along with its first Board of Directors consisting of Harold Kelly, Tony Norris, Guy Kay, David Finigan and Myrna Abramowicz. The five-member Board of Directors serve for staggered four year terms. The current Board of Directors includes:

- Ward One      Karen Bower Turjanis ([kbowerturjanis@ncrposd.org](mailto:kbowerturjanis@ncrposd.org))
- Ward Two      Tony Norris ([tnorris@ncrposd.org](mailto:tnorris@ncrposd.org))
- Ward Three    Brent Randol ([brandol@ncrposd.org](mailto:brandol@ncrposd.org))
- Ward Four     Dave Finigan ([dfinigan@ncrposd.org](mailto:dfinigan@ncrposd.org))
- Ward Five     Barry Christian ([bchristian@ncrposd.org](mailto:bchristian@ncrposd.org))

The District adopted its first Master Plan in 2009. The Plan was updated by the Board of Directors in 2012. The current update is intended to document what the District has accomplished to date, and to set the District’s policy and financial framework for the next 15 years.

## Process for this Update:

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Board of Directors review Preliminary Draft | March 2019                   |
| Release Preliminary draft for public review | March 2019                   |
| Outreach and receive public comment         | March - July 2019            |
| Public Hearing                              | July 2019 (tentative)        |
| Adoption                                    | July-August 2019 (tentative) |

For inquiries about the Plan, or to otherwise communicate with the District, please contact the District General Manager John Woodbury at [jwoodbury@ncrposd.org](mailto:jwoodbury@ncrposd.org), 707-259-5933, or the Directors at the emails shown above, or write to NOSD at 1195 Third Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Napa, CA 94559.

# I. Executive Summary

The Napa Open Space District remains committed to the goals identified in the Master Plan adopted by the District Board of Directors in 2008. This Update reaffirms those goals, but adjusts specific objectives and provides greater focus, based on the achievements and experience of the District in its first twelve years of operation, as well as a better understanding of broader trends in the community and in the natural environment.

Since formation, the District has:

- preserved 5,090 acres of open space through acquisition in fee title and 200 acres through conservation easements,
- developed and/or operates 53 miles of non-motorized recreational trails,
- saved two State Parks from closing, including 1,900 acres of forest, a campground and day use area and the water-driven Bale Grist Mill along with other historic buildings,
- opened 900 acres of open space owned by other agencies for non-motorized recreation,
- established and now operates one youth-oriented camp
- acquired and is now restoring another group camp
- organized nearly 96,300 hours of volunteer service, worth just over \$1.9 million of benefit

This Update describes 14 parks, trails and other open space properties where the District has made significant investment and public outreach. These 14 project sites are categorized as Committed Projects.

In terms of priorities going forward, the primary and most essential focus of the District continues to be to protect, restore and preserve open space lands and their associated resources for current and future generations. Key aspects of this overarching goal include protection of water supplies and quality, maintaining and improving ecosystem health and protection of wildlife habitat including both core areas and connecting corridors.



*Egret takes flight in wetlands near the Napa River and Bay Trail in American Canyon*

Experiences and knowledge gained in the decade since the District Master Plan was adopted in 2008 have reinforced the importance of this goal, as well as suggesting how the District should sharpen its focus. In particular, the devastating wildfires of recent years have demonstrated the interconnectedness of public health and safety with ecosystem health, and the need to ramp up forest management activities.

In addition to protecting and stewarding valuable open space areas, the District also remains committed to making these areas accessible to the public. Considerable scientific research confirms what we innately know: spending time in nature is good for our physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It's also an excellent way to gain an understanding of what we as humans should be doing to care for the environment on which our quality of life depends.

“Healthy Parks Healthy People” is more than just a slogan for the District; it is a guiding principle for all the District’s work. Thus, the District intends to continue its work providing public access to the open space lands it protects and manages.

With this update to the Master Plan, the District acknowledges the need for a more comprehensive and seamless approach to outdoor recreation. While the



District's focus continues to be on nature-based recreation, there is no sharp line between a tot lot in a residential neighborhood, a city bicycle and pedestrian path, a community sports field, and a regional open space park. For this reason, this Update calls for the District to strengthen partnerships with the cities within Napa County, for planning, funding and implementing projects.

In 1970, half of all Napa residents lived in rural areas; today, more than 80 percent live in one of the five municipalities in Napa County. With an increasingly urban population, deliberate and organized effort to educate the next generation is necessary if people are to value the natural environment and understand how to care for it. This Update calls for continuing and expanding the District's naturalist program, providing field trips and outdoor education programs for students as well as the general population.

In 2015 the District convened a community advisory committee consisting of representatives from the County, each municipality and a range of community interests. The committee was asked three questions: (1) do you like what the District has done so far, (2) has the District done enough, or is there more to be done, and (3) if there is more to be done, how do we pay for it? The committee members concluded that they were impressed by what the District had accomplished with limited resources, that there was much more to be done, and that the District should seek voter approval for a small sales tax to pay for this essential work.

This Update renews the District's commitment to seeking adequate dedicated funding for the District. The District intends to work with Napa County, the four cities and one town within the County, other special districts and interested organizations to develop compatible partnerships for funding projects and provide improved public access to our abundant natural resources. The intent is to place a measure providing dedicated funding before the voters in 2020 in support of the objectives contained in this Master Plan Update.

Three scenarios are discussed in this Update:

- (1) Maintenance of Effort on Committed Projects. The Napa County discretionary grant based on a percentage of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax receipts is assumed to continue, as well as the District's ability to successfully compete for various other grants. Under this scenario, efforts to preserve Napa's natural landscapes will be strictly limited; it will take an estimated 60-plus years to complete the repairs, restorations and improvements needed for the District's already Committed Projects list.
- (2) Enhanced Progress. In addition to continuing existing revenue sources, this scenario assumes new revenues are approved that are equal to a ¼ cent sales tax dedicated to the purposes identified in this Master Plan Update. Under this scenario, in the next 15 years the District would be able to preserve an estimated 20,000



*Volunteer planting buckeye tree as part of bank restoration project at Moore Creek*

acres of land. This is expected to be sufficient to protect many, though not all, of the most valuable open space lands in the County that come on the market during this period of time, to manage those lands for water supply, water quality, and wildlife habitat purposes, and to



make necessary improvements so the public can responsibly enjoy these beautiful landscapes. This scenario assumes 20 percent of the new revenues would be made available to the four cities and one town within Napa County to implement their park and recreation goals. This scenario also includes dedicated funding for fuel reduction/invasive plant removal to help manage wildfire risk, and dedicated funding to provide at least one outdoor education experience annually for every school child.

valuable open space lands that come on the market, with less risk of losing unique and irreplaceable resources to inappropriate development.

- (3) Accelerated Preservation and Implementation. This scenario assumes new revenues equal to a ½ cent sales tax dedicated to the purposes identified in this Master Plan Update. This



*Napa County Search and Rescue team trains at Camp Berryessa*

scenario assumes 20 percent of the new revenues would be made available to the four cities and one town within Napa County to implement their park and recreation goals, and also includes the wildfire management and outdoor education activities contained in Scenario Two. The additional revenues in Scenario Three would enable the District to protect and manage an estimated 40,000 acres of additional watershed, habitat and other

## II. District Goals

The District Master Plan adopted in 2008 identifies four goals for the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District. The spirit of these four goals continue to guide the District. They are restated in this Update as follows:

**Goal: Preserve, restore and protect open space lands, watershed resources and wildlife habitat.** Of particular importance is the protection of watersheds that provide municipal drinking water, as well as watersheds that feed the rivers, lakes and wetlands so essential to both wildlife and agriculture. We must also improve forest



*Linda Falls is a source of drinking water for the City of Napa—and adds exceptional beauty that all can appreciate*

management in order to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

**Goal: Develop a system of parks, trails, and accessible open space that supports outdoor recreation and promotes physical and mental health.** District objectives include serving as broad a range of nature-based recreational interests as possible, distributed equitably throughout Napa County, with special attention given to projects in closest proximity to where people live and work.

**Goal: Provide historical, cultural and environmental education.** The District's focus is hands-on outdoor education (as contrasted to classroom learning) that takes advantage of District-owned and/or operated open space lands. A primary objective is to train the next generation of Napa County residents to understand and be good stewards of our water, air, land and other natural resources, as well as the plants and animals with which we share this precious place.

**Goal: Pursue effective District management and interagency partnerships.** The District needs to maintain and strengthen its organizational capacity, while also coordinating with and supporting partnerships with other agencies, community-based organizations and the private sector to take advantage of their existing capacity and minimize public costs. A guiding principle of the District as articulated in the first District Master Plan of 2008 is to not duplicate or compete with existing agencies, organizations or the private sector; rather, District energy has and will continue to be dedicated to projects and programs that otherwise would not be accomplished, and where District involvement adds value.



### III. What We've Accomplished

Since its formation in 2006, the Napa Open Space District has compiled a portfolio of open space properties, parks and trails that it owns outright and/or operates on behalf of others. Together, these open space lands preserve watersheds, woodlands, wildlife and other natural resources, provide recreational and educational opportunities, and serve as building blocks for future strategic acquisitions.

Since formation, the District has:

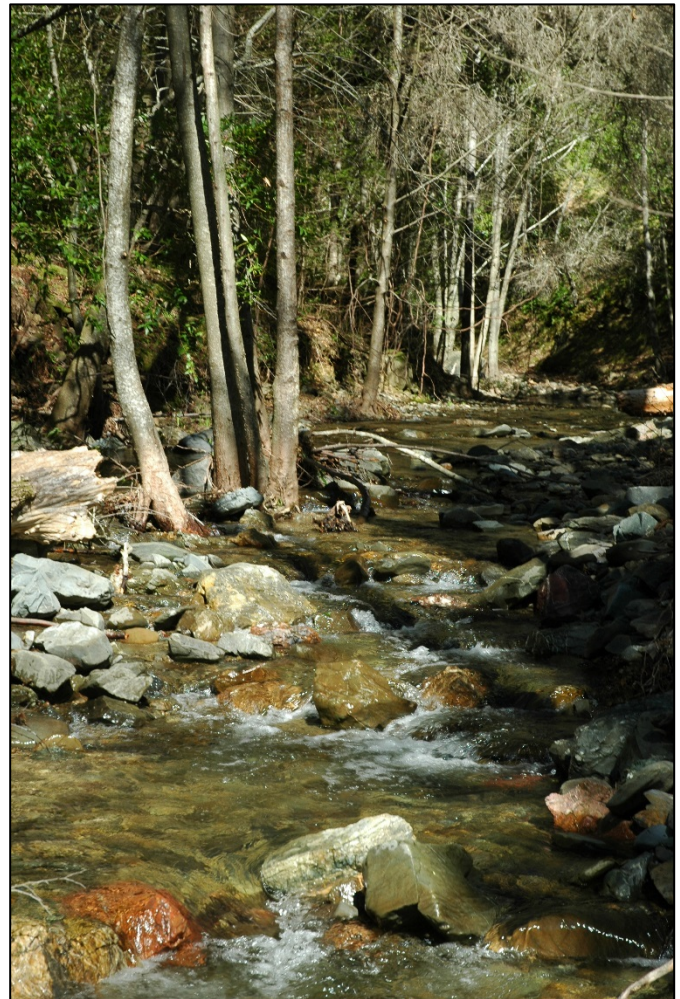
- preserved 5,090 acres of open space through acquisition and 200 acres through conservation easements,
- developed and/or operates 53 miles of non-motorized recreational trails,
- saved two State Parks from closing, including 1,900 acres of forest, a campground and day use area and the water-driven Bale Grist Mill along with other historic buildings,
- opened 900 acres of open space owned by other agencies for non-motorized recreation,
- established and operates one youth-oriented camp
- acquired and is now restoring another group camp
- organized nearly 96,300 hours of volunteer service, worth just over \$1.9 million of benefit

The discussion below outlines the 14 projects where the District has already made substantial investments. In this Update, these projects are referred to as the Committed Projects. Other projects identified in the 2008 Master Plan are still desirable, but for one reason or another have not yet progressed. These other potential projects are included in the Appendix to this Update, with brief notes about their status. For more complete descriptions of these other projects, please refer to the 2008 Master Plan and the 2012 Update.

#### Moore Creek Park

Moore Creek Park consists of 673 acres of municipal watershed land owned and managed by the District (the

Moore Creek Unit) and 900 acres owned by the City of Napa and managed by the District for recreational use (the Lake Hennessey Unit). The park currently has about 15 miles of trails, and plans for approximately 5 additional miles of trails within the park, as well as a trail connection north to Angwin. The park protects 3 miles of Moore Creek, an important source of Lake Hennessey's drinking water supply. About 50 percent of the Moore Creek watershed is now protected from conversion to other uses, thanks to the District's



*Moore Cree flows into Lake Hennessey and provides water for City of Napa residents*

purchase combined with other publicly-owned land and conservation easements held by the Land Trust of Napa



County. Moore Creek Park preserves iconic Oak woodlands, a mixed forest of Madrone, Douglas Fir and Gray Pine, grasslands and serpentine chaparral. In 2017 over 20,000 people used the trails in Moore Creek Park; of these, 68 percent were hikers, under 1 percent were equestrians, and 31 percent were mountain bicyclists. If the opportunity arises, the District is interested in acquiring land to expand the park and increase protection for the Lake Hennessey watershed.

Next steps:

- Complete the Madrone Footpath
- Complete a mountain bike optimized trail alternative to the Alta Hennessey Trail
- Be prepared to protect more of the Moore Creek and Chiles Creek watersheds as opportunities arise. For budget projection purposes, \$30 million is estimated to be needed for future acquisitions of undeveloped Lake Hennessey watershed parcels.

#### Napa River and Bay Trail

The Napa River and Bay Trail is a Class I (paved) pedestrian and bicycle path which will eventually connect from the southern boundary of the City of American Canyon to the northern boundary of the City of Napa. Over two-thirds of the population of Napa County lives in the area served by this trail. Except for the section north of Imola Avenue in the City of Napa, the route is also part of the ambitious 350 mile-long region-wide San Francisco Bay Trail, now a little more than half completed. The portions of the route within the cities are mostly the responsibility of the respective cities, while the District has focused on the sections of the trail within the unincorporated area between the two. In partnership with the City of American Canyon, the District has constructed about 5 miles of the trail, with just over 4 miles remaining to be completed. In addition, in partnership with the Vine Trail Coalition, the District has agreed to hold the trail easement and manage the trail for a short segment between the former Napa Pipe property and Kennedy Park which is shared by the Napa River and Bay Trail and the Napa Valley Vine Trail; that section will be constructed as part of the redevelopment of the former Napa Pipe



*The Napa River and Bay Trail is an excellent place to observe wild flights of birds*

property, together with the section of the trail across the former Napa Pipe property. An estimated \$2.5 million will be needed to complete the missing section between Suscol Ferry Road and Green Island Road. Timing depends on whether rights of way can be obtained from the public agencies that own the property along the proposed route and permits obtained from regulatory agencies.

Next steps:

- The key hurdle is whether the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will permit the construction of approximately 700 feet of boardwalk on the perimeter of Fagan Marsh.
- If CDFW permit can be obtained for the boardwalk, seek a trail easement from the Napa Sanitation District for the rest of the route.
- If the above two actions can be completed, then a variety of regulatory permits will be needed.
- For budget projection purposes, \$2.5 million is estimated to be needed to complete the trail.

#### Suscol Headwaters Preserve

This Preserve encompasses the upper watershed of year-round Suscol Creek and protects valuable habitat for endangered steelhead trout and red-legged frogs, as well as several species of raptors, mountain lions and other wildlife. The Preserve also protects a Native American cultural site. Finally, public ownership of this area enables the construction of over five miles of the

Bay Area Ridge Trail between Highway 12 in Jameson Canyon and Skyline Park. The Bay Area Ridge Trail is a planned 550-mile recreational trail circumnavigating the Bay Area along the ridges that surround San Francisco Bay. Region-wide, nearly 400 miles of the Ridge Trail has been completed.



*Suscol Headwaters Preserve just three months after the October 2017 wildfires burned through the watershed*

The Suscol Preserve has historically been grazed with cattle, and the District intends to continue this practice, both to be supportive of agriculture, and to manage invasive grasses and reduce wildfire risk. The District acquired the first 411 acres of the Preserve in 2015, and the second 298 acres in 2017. Funding for acquisition of the Preserve came from the Priority Conservation Area program managed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments, from mitigation funds generated by the expansion of Highway 12, and from the State Coastal Conservancy. The Napa Valley Transportation Authority was a key partner in securing these funds, since purchase of the Preserve was the most cost-effective method to satisfy one of the mitigation requirements for the Highway 12 improvement project.

Next Steps:

- Obtain a Use Permit from Napa County

- Reconfigure existing ranch roads on the property in order to reduce soil erosion and better accommodate recreational use
- Construct several miles of new trails, mostly multi-use, though one of the proposed new loop trails may be optimized for mountain bicyclists
- Construct a trailhead staging area to provide public access from Highway 12
- Construct a new red-legged frog pond to comply with funding requirements
- An estimated \$500,000 and 2-3 years of work will be needed to complete these improvements

### Napa River Ecological Reserve

The District manages the front meadow on the 55-acre Napa River Ecological Reserve owned by the State of California and located on Yountville Crossroad where it bridges the Napa River. The Reserve offers one of the few spots along the non-tidal Napa River where the public can access the water. The Reserve features riparian woodland with great birdwatching, and is also a popular location for swimming and water play in the hot summer months. The District has been working for several years to control invasive plants in the meadow and replant with native vegetation. The District has also installed a short nature trail and an information kiosk



*Napa River Ecological Reserve is a great location for students to study river ecology*



and improved the parking area. District maintenance responsibilities include regular cleaning of a portable toilet, weekly trash pickup, and removal of graffiti as soon as it occurs. No further improvements to the Reserve are planned, but periodic removal of teasel, Himalayan blackberry, fennel, Harding grass and other invasive plant species will be required in perpetuity.

Next Steps:

- Continue meadow restoration and weed control
- Continue on-going cleaning and maintenance
- Continue sponsoring outdoor education field trips

Mt. Veeder including The Cove and Amy's Grove

The 51 acre Amy's Grove property at the confluence of Dry Creek and Wing Creek was donated to the District in 2015. In 2016 the District obtained an option to purchase a 160 acre rustic camp on Mt. Veeder, to the west of Amy's Grove at the headwaters of Wing Creek, that was owned by the Girl Scouts of Northern California and known as The Cove. The Cove includes the peak of Mt. Veeder, which is the highest mountain entirely within the boundaries of Napa County, and which offers an impressive 360 degree vista. Both properties burned in the firestorms in October 2017; Amy's Grove was only lightly burned, but the fire in The Cove was extremely hot, destroying all the campground improvements and killing most of trees. The natural environment is expected to recover and evolve through natural processes, though active restoration work is needed at The Cove.

The District intends to replace the campground improvements so it can continue to be used for camping by Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other groups. This will entail constructing a new water system, reestablishing campsites, and building rustic shade and rain shelters. In addition, the trails that led from the campground to the peak of Mt. Veeder need to be entirely rebuilt.

In 2017 the District obtained options to expand Amy's Grove by purchasing an additional 164 acres, and accepting the donation of another 7 acres, that straddle Dry Creek to the north of Wing Creek. These

acquisitions will protect two more year-round tributaries of Dry Creek, plus another ¼ mile of the main stem of Dry Creek. Enchanted Hills Camp is located between this additional property, Amy's Grove and The Cove. The District is now exploring with Lighthouse for the Blind, which owns and operates Enchanted Hills Camp, about the potential for a trail connecting from Dry Creek Road to the top of Mt. Veeder, passing through the woods next to Enchanted Hills Camp. The trail would be designed to serve both the visually-impaired users of Enchanted Hills Camp as well as the general public.

If the opportunity arises, the District is interested in expanding Amy's Grove and The Cove through additional acquisitions, to provide more water quality protection for the Wing Creek and Dry Creek watersheds, as well as enhanced recreational amenities.



*Snow softens the visual impact of the October 2017 wildfire that burned through The Cove*

Next Steps:

- Complete the restoration of The Cove and repair of the campground and trails, including removal of dead hazardous trees, replanting , and control of post-fire invasive plants
- Exercise options to expand Amy's Grove by 171 acres
- Construct a new trail connecting Amy's Grove to The Cove, along with interpretive elements, in partnership with Lighthouse for the Blind



- Exercising existing options for land acquisitions will require \$1,150,000. The trail, parking and other improvements proposed for Amy’s Grove are estimated to cost \$500,000. Forest restoration and rebuilding of the campground at The Cove is estimated to cost another \$500,000.

Oat Hill Mine Trail

Built in the 1890’s to serve the Oat Hill, Corona and Twin Peaks mercury mines, the Oat Hill Mine Road was abandoned as a public road in the 1970’s. The road was reopened by the District in 2007 as a non-motorized recreational trail between Calistoga and the western terminus of Aetna Springs Road, and is known as the Oat Hill Mine Trail.

In 2017 over 18,000 people used the Oat Hill Mine Trail; of these 88 percent were hikers, and nearly all of the rest were mountain bicyclists.

The Oat Hill Mine Road easement continues north of Aetna Springs Road to the Lake County line, but has not been opened for recreational use because the right of way runs through the middle of former mining areas that have not yet been adequately cleaned and secured. The District has supported work by the non-profit organization Tuleyome and the owner of two of the mines to clean up and secure the mines; when that



*The Oat Hill Mine Trail winds through the volcanic cliffs of the Palisades north of Calistoga*

work is complete the District will evaluate the feasibility of opening the Trail north of Aetna Springs Road.

The Oat Hill Mine Road easement crosses both public and private parcels. One of the privately-owned parcels was donated to the District in 2014. Should they become available, the District would be interested in acquiring the other private parcels to protect recreational use of the trail and to prevent inappropriate development in an area with both high habitat values and an extreme risk of wildfire.

Next Steps:

- If determined to be safe to do so, extend the Oat Hill Mine Trail north to the Lake County line
- Purchase other private properties along the Oat Hill Mine Trail if they become available
- Up to \$1 million may be needed for future acquisition of privately-owned open space land along the trail corridor; another estimated \$250,000 would be needed for trail improvements between Aetna Springs Road and the Lake County line. A possible back country camp is estimated to cost up to \$250,000 to provide potable water and appropriate sanitation.

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park

Faced with the proposed closure of 70 State Parks, including two in Napa County, the District in April 2012 assumed operating responsibility for Bothe-Napa Valley State park and the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park under a 5-year agreement (which has now converted to a month-to-month agreement). The District and State Parks are negotiating a new 20-year Operating Agreement. Since assuming operating responsibility, the District has completed the installation of 10 yurts, restored 5 cabins, repaired and reoccupied the historic Wright House, made safety improvements to the swimming pool, and made substantial progress in addressing decades of deferred maintenance, though considerable deferred maintenance remains to be addressed.



*The Bale Grist Mill is a unique venue for interpreting the history of the Napa Valley*

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park includes a campground with 47 tent/RV sites, 10 yurts, 5 cabins, a group camp site, day use area, swimming pool, visitor center and pioneer cemetery. The Bale Grist Mill is a restored water-driven mill that provides a fascinating venue for learning about life in Napa in the late 1800's. The District operates an active naturalist program at Bothe and offers student and public tours of the Mill.

Since assuming operation, the District has been able to increase revenues without raising basic fees, and cut expenses through more efficient operations, with the result that the District operates the two parks "in the black" without County-funded assistance. The positive cash balance is being used to tackle the major maintenance backlog left by State Parks.

Once a new operating agreement is executed, the District expects to continue with repairs and restoration, including bringing into productive use the boarded-up Recreation Hall, two additional cabins and another craftsman-era house. The District is also interested in supporting efforts to restore Ritchie Creek for steelhead migration and spawning. Deferred maintenance costs far exceed available revenues, so the scope and timing of improvements is tied to the level of operating profits that are generated, plus any grants that can be secured. An old estimate developed by State Parks indicates the full cost of all the deferred maintenance needs at the two parks is well over \$8 million.

#### Next Steps:

- Continue to operate the two parks, and use any revenues not needed for operations to continue restoration and major repairs
- Seek grant funds for specific high cost repairs, including rebuilding the water wheel at the Mill and restoration of Ritchie Creek to enable fish passage
- Support the Vine Trail Coalition's efforts to complete the Vine Trail segment proposed for Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and support the Bay Area Ridge Trail connection to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park in Sonoma County.

#### Robert Louis Stevenson State Park

The new Operating Agreement for Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park is also expected to include Robert Louis Stevenson (RLS) State Park. RLS includes many miles of hiking trails, a popular rock climbing area, awesome views from the top of Mt. St. Helena and from Table Rock, and several buildings both historic and modern. The buildings were abandoned until the District helped repair one of them (a small cabin) and its water system, and arranged for a live-in caretaker. The 2017 wildfires damaged the water system.

With a new Operating Agreement, the District intends to complete repairs to the cabin so there can be an on-site staff presence at RLS. The District will also evaluate



*The peak of Mount St. Helena in Robert Louis Stevenson State Park is a popular destination for those seeking vigorous exercise and unrivaled views*



the feasibility of repairing the other buildings (two houses and two barns).

Next Steps:

- Finalize the new Operating Agreement with State Parks
- Prepare a General Development Plan for RLS for approval by State Parks
- Repair the houses and other buildings that have been abandoned within RLS
- Obtain permission from Caltrans to install a bus stop on Highway 29 to serve the staging area for RLS
- Repairs to the cabin and its water system are estimated to cost \$50,000. Repairs to the other buildings in the park and to the staging area could run as high as \$1 million.

Camp Berryessa

Ecocamp Berryessa is a 64 bed (in eight tent cabins) facility serving youth and community groups, located on the banks of the Putah Creek arm of Lake Berryessa. Camp Berryessa is a unique location for learning swimming and boating, and also offers training in cooking (and cleaning!), teamwork, and a myriad of other skills. The District constructed and operates the camp under an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, the agency that manages Lake Berryessa and the federal lands surrounding the lake.



*Camp Berryessa offers youth groups everything from archery to water sports, with a lot of environmental education mixed in*

A Phase II expansion of the camp, to add another 32 beds and a central dining facility, including expanded wastewater system, is permitted under the District agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. The District is currently gaining experience operating the Phase I camp to determine the level of demand and cost for the potential Phase II improvements.

Next Steps:

- Continue to operate the camp and develop additional partnerships with other organizations offering youth camping experiences
- Evaluate the desirability of expanding the camp by another 32 beds. If pursued, this Phase II is preliminarily estimated to cost up to \$1.5 million.

Berryessa Peak Trail

This eight mile (sixteen mile round trip) hiking trail, made possible with the donation of a trail easement by



*The Berryessa Peak Trail gives access to thousands of acres of federal land with unmatched views thanks to a trail easement donated by a local rancher*

a local ranching family, provides public access to several thousand acres of otherwise shut-off public lands owned by the federal government, and offers dramatic views of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east, Mt. St. Helena and the Mayacamas Range to the west, Snow Mountain to the north, and Mt. Diablo to the south. A wildfire in 2018 caused minor damage to trail signs and



fence stiles. The cost of these repairs is minimal, since the work will be performed by volunteers.

Next Steps:

- Repair fire damage to signs and fence stiles
- Maintain the trail as needed

Putah Creek Land Bank (Spanish Valley, Crystal Flats and Stone Corral)

This land bank of 2,790 acres in three distinct areas was donated to the District in 2010. The Spanish Valley unit comprises 1,900 acres of open grasslands surrounded by oak woodland and chaparral covered hills west and south of Lake Berryessa Estates. Spanish Valley links together several hundred additional acres of scattered tracts owned by the federal government, and preserves an exceptionally rich and healthy ecology. Crystal Flats covers 684 acres along both sides of Putah Creek north



*Putah Creek is the primary source of water for Lake Berryessa; District holdings protect a portion of this watershed*

of Snell Creek and includes an unimproved campground used by Lake Berryessa Estates property owners. Stone Corral covers 206 acres east of Lake Berryessa Estates along the western banks of Putah Creek. Stone Corral has a day use area and boat launch used by the Lake Berryessa Estates property owners. The campground, day use area and boat launch were in place before the District obtained fee title to the land. The District’s long-term objective is to support appropriate recreational use by both the existing adjacent property owners as well as the general public. At this time there

is no specific plan and no estimate of costs. A placeholder projection of \$1 million for unspecified future improvements is included in long-range budget projections contained in this Master Plan Update.

Next Steps:

- Develop a long-term plan for these three areas
- While in land-banked status, manage the properties for their resource values
- Investigate the feasibility of an on-going prescribed burn program to enhance native grasses and forbs in Spanish Valley as well as reduce wildfire risk for the nearby Lake Berryessa Estates community.

Berryessa Vista Wilderness Park

The District acquired this 224-acre oak and bay woodland from the Land Trust of Napa County in 2008 for approximately one-third of its appraised value. The property abuts another 520 acres of publicly or land trust owned open space. Accessible only by hand-launched boat from Capell Cove, the District’s property together with the adjacent public and land trust properties protects the area’s unique wildlife and habitat, and allows hiking and rustic camping. The District is currently working to make back country trail and campground improvements. The District also intends to acquire from the land trust the 80-acre “donut hole” between current District lands and those



*Berryessa Vista Wilderness Park is only accessible by canoe or kayak; in this photo Boy Scouts are exploring Capell Creek just upstream of Lake Berryessa*

owned by the federal government, to provide logical boundaries for and protect the environmental integrity of this largely intact wilderness. Acquisition of other adjacent and nearby undeveloped parcels would be desirable both for habitat and wildlife protection and to potentially provide an overland access route into the wilderness park from the Knoxville-Berryessa Road.

Next Steps:

- Redesign trails and 4-wheel drive tracks to reduce existing soil erosion
- Acquire the 80 acre “donut hole” property from the Land Trust of Napa County
- Explore other acquisitions to expand habitat protection and provide overland access
- For budget projection purposes, this Update allocates \$1 million for future land acquisition.

Smittle Creek (Cedar Roughs)

This 443-acre land holding was acquired by the District in 2015 using a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board. Another 80 acres immediately to the west was acquired at the same time by the Wilderness Land Trust and subsequently transferred to the Bureau of Land Management. The District acquisition protects an area of oak woodlands, grasslands and chaparral, as well as offering the potential for the first practical public access into the 6,500 acre Cedar Roughs Wilderness managed

by BLM. Since acquisition, the District has removed a substantial amount of trash from the property, and prepared resource surveys in preparation for obtaining a Use Permit to construct trails and open the area to the public. An estimated \$400,000 is needed to obtain permits and open the property for public recreation. This estimate includes upgrades to an existing spring-fed water system and installation of a septic system to accommodate a caretaker trailer placed on the property, as well as repairs to existing ranch roads.

Next Steps

- Obtain Use Permit from Napa County
- Construct new trail from the Smittle Creek Day Use Area up to the first ridge within the property
- Repair existing ranch roads to reduce soil erosion
- Explore feasibility of developing a caretaker site
- An estimated \$50,000 is needed for basic trail construction and road repairs. Construction of an RV host site is estimated to cost approximately \$100,000



*View of Lake Berryessa from Smittle Creek*

## IV. Priorities

While the four broad-brush goals identified in the 2008 Master Plan remain essentially unchanged, the District's priorities have evolved through the past twelve years of investigating and implementing projects and operating parks and trails. Community concerns have also evolved, with increased attention being paid to the impacts of growth, watershed threats, drought and wildfire. This section discusses refinements to District priorities in light of the experiences of recent years.

### **Goal: Preserve, restore and protect open space lands, watershed resources and wildlife habitat.**

The primary and most essential focus of the District continues to be to protect, restore and preserve open space lands and their associated resources for current and future generations. Key aspects of this overarching goal include protection of water supplies and quality, maintaining and improving ecosystem health and protection of wildlife habitat including both core areas and connecting corridors.

Experiences and knowledge gained in the decade since the Master Plan was adopted in 2008 have reinforced the importance of this goal, and suggest how the District should sharpen its focus. In particular, the devastating wildfires of recent years have demonstrated the interconnectedness of public health and safety with ecosystem health, and the need to ramp up forest management activities.

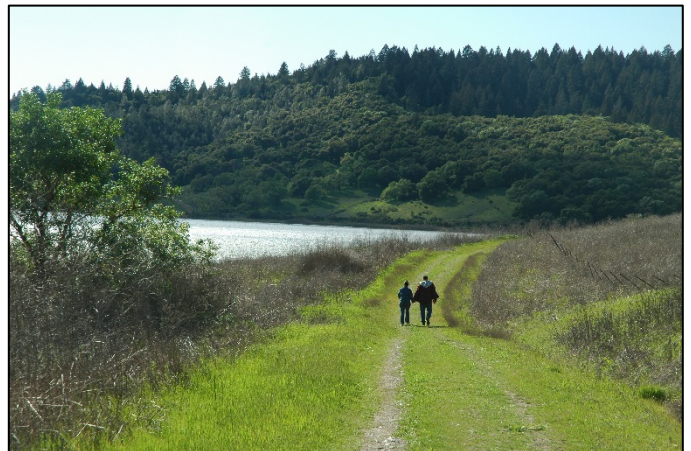
#### Water Quality and Water Supply

Napa County residents are fortunate to obtain much of their municipal water from local watersheds. This water is collected in 6 locations: Lake Hennessey and Milliken Reservoir (City of Napa), Rector Reservoir (Town of Yountville and Veterans Home), Friesen Lakes

(Angwin), Bell Canyon (City of St. Helena) and Kimball Reservoir (City of Calistoga).

The most effective and cost-efficient way to protect public water supplies and water quality is by protecting the watersheds that generate municipal drinking water supplies. Privately-owned property is subject to the changing needs of those who own the property, and may be developed in a variety of ways which impact the watershed. Permanent protection is best accomplished through public ownership, or through conservation easements held by public agencies or non-profit land trusts dedicated to these purposes. Of the 47,300 acres of municipal watershed lands serving Napa County cities, just over 12,000 acres (or about 25%) are so protected, meaning over 35,000 acres of these critical watershed lands are unprotected and subject to the vagaries of individual interests. Of the unprotected acreage, just over 15,000 acres (or approximately 32 percent) is undeveloped (eg, no houses, commercial buildings, or planted crops, though there may be small-scale improvements for ranching, hunting or other low intensity uses).

Those municipal watershed lands which have not yet been developed should get first priority for protection,



*Moore Creek Park is an example of combining watershed protection with compatible public recreation*



if for no reason other than that undeveloped parcels can be acquired for less cost than developed parcels while achieving comparable benefit. Within these areas, the lands which also support high levels of biodiversity or which provide connecting corridors for wildlife are especially important.

Most of the unincorporated areas of Napa County depend on groundwater supplies or diversions from in-stream flows. Traditionally, much rural development tapped into surface water. However, traditional stream flows and ponds are in most cases inadequate to supply additional development. Indeed, existing diversions in many cases already exceed the capacity of these streams to fulfill their basic ecosystem functions to support riparian species and wildlife.

Underground aquifers also have their limits. How underground aquifers are connected, and their overall health, is not all that well understood. A few areas, notably the MST (Milliken, Sarco and Tulocay watersheds) east of the City of Napa, have been formally acknowledged as suffering from overdraft. In other rural areas, groundwater supplies are often limited, and/or contain minerals that make them unpotable (high salinity or arsenic for example) or unsuitable for agriculture (high boron for example).

Areas with depleted or declining groundwater supplies are obvious candidates for protection as open space, since such protection can prevent further stress on the overall system. Areas where the groundwater is highly saline or contains chemicals such as boron or arsenic are also logical candidates for protection as open space; such areas have limited value for irrigated agriculture or for residential development, but still generally deliver high ecosystem benefits (collecting and distributing surface rainwater, providing wildlife habitat, and supporting endemic, rare and endangered species)

**Objective:** Protect 15,000 acres of municipal watershed lands through acquisition of fee title or conservation easements, provided there are willing sellers

**Objective:** Prioritize protection of ponds, lakes, and major Blue Line streams.

**Objective:** Prioritize protection of lands with depleted or unusable groundwater supplies.

### Ecosystem Health

Guaranteeing healthy watersheds is not a matter of just protecting land in a natural state, but also about maintaining and enhancing ecosystem health. Major threats to ecosystem health include climate change, habitat fragmentation and the proliferation of invasive species. These three factors interact in complex ways that can be devastating—a point driven home by the unprecedented number, scale and destruction of recent wildfires.

- **Climate change.** Climate change is nothing new, but the rate of change is unprecedented in modern human history. Nearly all scientists agree a major cause of climate change today is human activity, and specifically the release of carbon dioxide, methane and other gases or particulate matter into the atmosphere that trap heat and are raising the earth's average temperature. Protecting open space land in its natural state can be beneficial by sequestering carbon in retained vegetation, in root systems and in undisturbed soil. Protecting open space land also has the indirect benefit of helping focus human investment and activities into urban areas, where less energy is required to ensure a vibrant economy. Transportation is a major source of human-generated carbon dioxide; reducing vehicle miles traveled is the single most effective way of reducing the generation of greenhouse gases, and focusing growth into existing urban areas along is the best way of reducing per person vehicle miles travelled (more non-motorized paths and trails also helps).
- **Habitat fragmentation.** Small, isolated habitats do not perform well. The diversity and density of wildlife declines dramatically as habitats become fragmented and isolated. This problem is exacerbated

by climate change. To respond to climate change, animals and plants need to be able to migrate as some habitats become inhospitable to them, and other habitats open up. To enable this movement, it is essential to protect habitats at the landscape scale, with both core areas as well as connecting corridors.

Habitat fragmentation in Napa County today is mostly human-caused. Suburban development sprawling into the countryside has been dramatically slowed by a series of land use initiatives and regulations adopted over many decades. However, the urban limit line and minimum parcel size restrictions that have been used to control suburban expansion are increasingly ineffective at controlling the proliferation of estate homes, remote wineries and clearcutting of forests. While these latter forms of development may visually often appear to retain considerable open space, they can have tremendous adverse impacts on habitat and the diversity and density of wildlife. Thoughtful regulation can reduce these adverse impacts, such as by requiring the retention of habitat corridors, protection of microhabitats (such as wetlands and riparian corridors), and control of stormwater runoff, but regulation has its own limits. Much of rural Napa has already been subdivided into parcels so small that regulations sufficiently strong to adequately protect habitat and water quality would render those parcels largely worthless; this would be both an undue financial burden on individual property owners as well as potentially constitute an illegal “takings” of property rights.

For the most ecologically valuable open space lands, where regulation by itself is inadequate, an essential tool for protecting the ecological benefits that all of the public enjoys is for the public to purchase these lands or to obtain conservation easements over the lands.

- **Invasive species.** The migration of species is a natural feature of long-term evolution. Many of the plants and animals that we tend to regard as part of our open landscapes came from elsewhere in the world. The problem, within a human time frame, is that the



*Volunteers including many students have donated hundreds of hours removing teasel, Himalayan blackberry, fennel and other invasive plants from the Napa River Ecological Reserve, and replanting native vegetation to improve habitat for wildlife*

rate of movement and change has increased dramatically since the time when the first Europeans arrived in California. This increasingly rapid pace of change allows native species less time to adapt and evolve, resulting in accelerating rates of native species extinction and disruption of ecological balances.

The spread of non-native species can have significant implications for people. Star thistle, goat grass and other invasive weeds severely degrade rangeland suitable for ranching. Invasive *Arrundo donax* worsens flood risk by clogging waterways. In east county streams, tamarisk sucks up surface water and dries up streams. French broom has spread to many parts of rural Napa, creating a dense, highly flammable forest understory that greatly increases the threat of uncontrollable and excessively hot wildfires. As they multiply, invasive weeds further exacerbate habitat fragmentation.

In California, many counties formerly had Weed Management Areas—cooperative, multi-agency, public-private partnerships to control the spread of targeted weeds. Unfortunately, these efforts were even in the best of times never adequately funded, and that funding has since diminished or disappeared. In the last



decade, Napa County's WMA ceased to function due to a lack of funding.

- **Wildfire Risk.** The devastating wildfires in and around Napa County in the past few years are the result of a combination of the above factors. Climate change has increased the frequency of drought, raised average temperatures and lowered humidities. Rural development has put more people in the path of wildfires. The proliferation of some invasive species has increased fuel loads and created fuel ladders into tree canopies, increasing the risk of destructive wildfires.

These changes are on top of the accumulated impact of



*Invasive French broom forms a dangerous ladder fuel. Volunteers have spent countless hours removing mature plants and then coming back to pluck new seedlings to reduce wildfire risk at Moore Creek Park*

several hundred years of fire suppression, starting with the arrival of the Spanish in the 1600's. Prior to that, Native Americans regularly lit fires to clear out brush and improve the habitats that provided them food. Our iconic oak woodlands are the result of their active fire management. European settlers to the Bay Area did not understand the importance of fire to maintaining the landscape, and banned the practice of setting frequent small fires. We now have an environment with much higher fuel loads than previously, one that is primed to burn. Wildfires today can quickly shift from small-scale, relatively cool events that enhance forest health, to

massive, very hot conflagrations that destroy everything in their path.

**Objective:** Use the Conservation Lands Network research and mapping to identify the areas with the highest conservation benefits for core habitats and wildlife corridors.

**Objective:** Prioritize the protection of open space lands with the greatest potential for carbon sequestration in above-ground vegetation and below-ground root zones.

**Objective:** Use historic wildfire mapping data to identify areas most prone to destructive wildfires, and prioritize these areas for protection from development, so that fewer people and less monetary investment is placed at risk.

**Objective:** Seek funding to support comprehensive, consistent and sustainable efforts to target the most damaging invasive species, control their spread and density and reduce fuel loads.

**Goal: Develop a system of parks, trails, and accessible open space that supports outdoor recreation and promotes physical and mental health.**

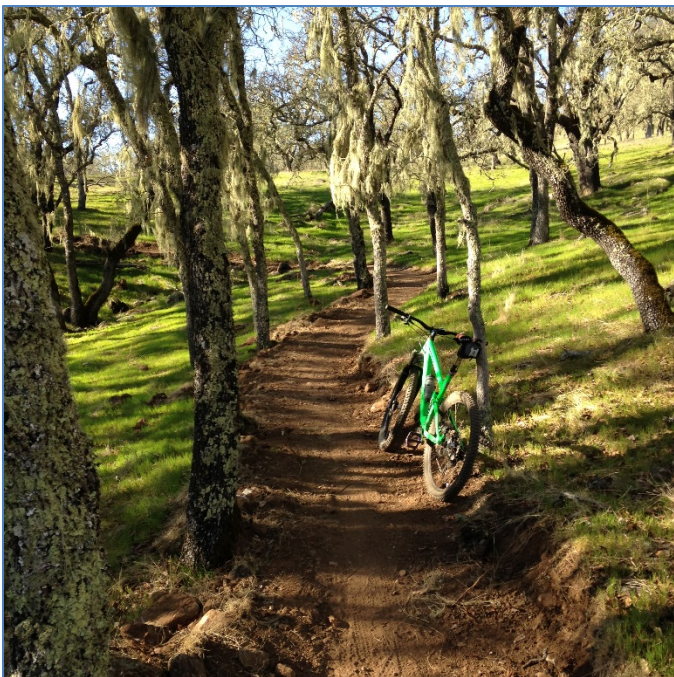
Considerable scientific research confirms what we innately know: spending time in nature is good for our physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It's also an excellent way to gain an understanding of what we as humans should be doing to care for the environment on which our quality of life depends.

"Healthy Parks Healthy People" is more than just a slogan for the District; it is a guiding principle for all the District's work. Thus, the District intends to continue its work providing public access to the open space lands it protects and manages.

With this update to the Master Plan, however, the District acknowledges the need for a more

comprehensive and seamless approach to outdoor recreation. While the District's focus continues to be on nature-based recreation, there is no sharp line between a tot lot in a residential neighborhood, a city bicycle and pedestrian path, a community sports field, and a regional open space park.

In terms of the District's direct responsibilities, this Update continues to emphasize the construction of new trails and paths, and campgrounds and picnic areas, for these are the primary infrastructure of public access. The District has and will continue to primarily build multi-use trails that serve diverse user groups ranging from casual strollers to serious hikers to mountain bicyclists to equestrians, and facilitate diverse interests ranging from bird watching to dog walking, and exercise to quiet contemplation.



*New trails feed both the body and the soul*

That said, in some locations it is desirable and appropriate to optimize trail design for particular uses. For example, the Madrone Trail now under construction in Moore Creek Park, is an entirely hand built trail on steep and heavily forested terrain. It is being designed as a footpath for hikers, in part to serve those who want

a particularly quiet and contemplative experience, and in part due to the recognition that to build a full multi-use trail in that terrain would require an undue amount of soil disturbance to construct a sufficiently wide trail to be safely used by mountain bicyclists and equestrians. Conversely, in the District's recently acquired Suscol Headwaters Preserve, District staff is investigating the feasibility of a loop trail optimized for mountain bicyclists to supplement the multi-use trails also planned for that area. This area is being considered for a trail optimized for bicyclists because it is adjacent to an area (Skyline Park) already in great demand by bicyclists, yet beyond the distance range of most hikers; in this situation, optimizing the design of one trail in this area for one user group should have minimal impact on the experience of other user groups.

A different type of trail optimization is now under consideration for Amy's Grove. The District has begun discussions with the adjacent Enchanted Hills Camp. In conjunction with the expansion of Amy's Grove through the planned purchase of another 164 acres in 2019, the objective is to construct a trail network optimized for the blind and visually impaired.

In addition to trails the District will also continue to provide other facilities that enable public enjoyment of the outdoors. At Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, the District has continued to operate a traditional campground, while adding yurts and cabins for those wanting a more comfortable forest experience. At Ecocamp Berryessa, the District has built a campground with tent cabins and space for personal tents serving youth and other groups.

The District is now in the process of restoring the fire-damaged girl scout camp at The Cove on Mt. Veeder, with the goal of re-opening this well-loved camping facility.

The 2008 Master Plan contemplated backcountry camping on or near the Oat Hill Mine Trail, at Moore Creek Park, and potentially elsewhere. That continues to be a District objective.



To complement the above initiatives, the District has made some progress working with the cities within Napa County on joint projects such as the Napa River and Bay Trail, or the removal of invasive French Broom from Westwood Hills Park. This Update recognizes the need for the District and the cities to work even more closely in the future, so that the public is provided a full, seamless and complementary network of open spaces and recreational facilities.

Another challenge is to ensure the permanent protection of Skyline Wilderness Park, including both its open space benefits as well as its recreational amenities. Skyline Park is State of California land leased to the County of Napa, which in turns has an agreement with the non-profit Skyline Park Citizens Association to operate and maintain it. The State lease expires in 2030, after which the State could sell the land for other purposes. While Skyline Park is not a direct District responsibility, the District's General Manager acts as the County's agent in administering the agreements with the State and the Association. The District and the County of Napa are committed to acquiring the property to preserve the park in perpetuity. Several attempts have been made to acquire the property, but getting State approval has so far not been successful.

**Objective:** Increase the amount of accessible parkland by at least 20,000 acres.

**Objective:** Construct another 50 miles of recreational trails over the next 15 years

**Objective:** Develop additional back county camping

**Objective:** Cooperate with the municipalities of Napa County to provide seamless recreation programing and a full range of park and recreation facilities

**Objective:** Work with the Skyline Park Citizens Association and the County of Napa to obtain State authorization to acquire the property so that it will remain a park in perpetuity.

## **Goal: Provide historical, cultural and environmental education.**

In the process of protecting open space lands, the District also has the responsibility to preserve important elements of our archaeological, cultural and historical heritage. These include Native American cultural sites, homesteads of the first European immigrants, the labor-intensive rock walls, bridges and buildings constructed primarily by Asian and Irish immigrants in the 1800's and early 1900's, and the remnants of resorts that thrived before the advent of the automobile. Currently, the District is protecting and restoring significant historical resources at the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park and Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, as well as significant cultural resources at Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and the Suscol Headwaters Preserve.

In 1970 half of all Napa residents lived in rural areas; today, more than 80 percent live in one of the five municipalities within Napa county. With an increasingly urban population, deliberate and organized efforts at educating the next generation is necessary if people are to value the natural environment, and understand how to care for it.

Napa County currently has approximately 23,000 school-aged children (Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade). To enable every student to have one outdoor education



*Learning about Napa's history is both fun and tasty*

field trip per year is estimated to cost about \$750,000 annually.

**Objective:** Support outdoor education programs that combine hands-on physical activity with teaching about the natural environment and how to be a good steward of the land, with a target of providing one additional outdoor education field trip annually for each K-12 student.

**Goal: Pursue effective District management and interagency partnerships**

Since the District was established in 2006, one of its guiding principles has been to focus on those needs that are not being met by other public agencies, non-profit



*The District has launched a cooperative program with the City of Napa to reduce the amount of highly flammable French Broom from Westwood Hills Park*

organizations or the private sector. The objective is to supplement, not compete with existing efforts. As a result, the District has relied extensively on working in partnership with others.

The District has already demonstrated the power of such partnerships. Together with the City of American Canyon, more than 5 miles of trails have been constructed that provide residents with their first legal public access to the Napa River. Together with the City of Napa, the District has been able to open for public use approximately 900 acres of beautiful oak woodlands north of Lake Hennessey. Together with the County of Napa, the District has been able to convert the abandoned Oat Hill Mine Trail into an 8+ mile recreational trail. Together with the Bureau of Reclamation, the District has been able to construct and now operate Ecocamp Berryessa, Napa County’s only public youth-oriented group camp that is now being used by a variety of non-profit organizations and school groups.

The experience of the first 12 years of the District suggests there would be great value in expanding partnership with the cities within Napa County. Each of these municipalities has responsibility for urban parks and city-based recreation programs. None of the municipalities have sufficient financial resources to fully implement their own master plans.

**Objective:** Support joint funding with the four cities and one town within Napa County to provide a comprehensive and complementary set of parks, recreation facilities and related programs that seamlessly serve all Napa county residents.

I.



# V. Long-Term Financial Planning

## Historical Context

In 2004, the voters of Napa County approved increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax by 1.5 percent. While structured as a general purpose tax, the voters were promised by the Board of Supervisors that the new revenues would be used for parks and open space, visitor services and other special projects not then provided by the County. Since the District was formed in 2006, the Board of Supervisors has honored this promise and has granted approximately 60% of those revenues to the District (equal to \$916,000 for FY 2019-20). This grant has accounted for one-third of the District's overall revenues, with the District using the County grant to leverage other grants and donations, and to generate program revenue.

Even with impressive leveraging, the District is limited in what it can accomplish with the funding it has been able to obtain. For that reason, a community advisory committee was formed by the District in 2015, composed of representatives of each city, each Supervisorial district, and the general community. The advisory committee was asked three questions: (1) did the committee like what the District had done up to that point; (2) had the District done enough, or was there more to do; and (3) if there was more to do, how should that work be funded?

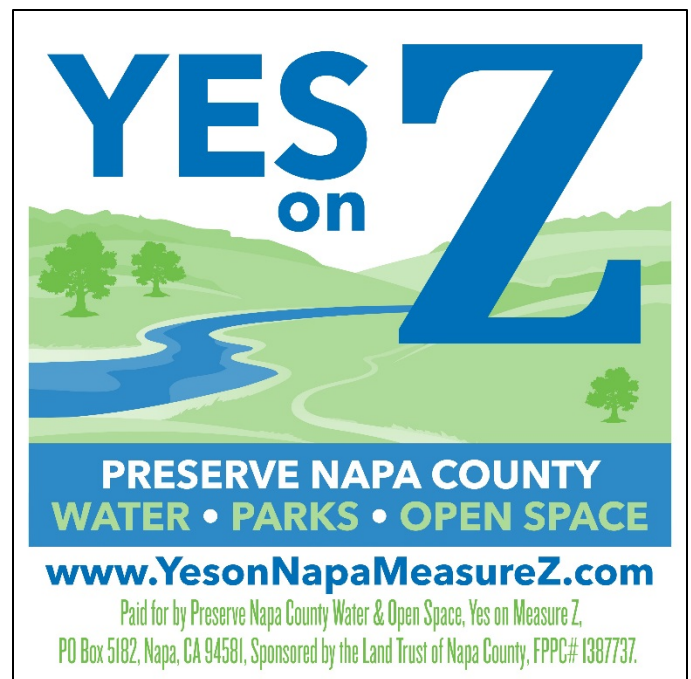
The citizen's advisory committee concluded that (1) they were impressed by what the District had accomplished, (2) there was a lot more that needed to be done, and (3) the District should propose a sales tax measure for voter consideration to fund the work.

Following the recommendation of the advisory committee, at the request of the District Board of Directors, the Napa County Board of Supervisors placed Measure Z on the November 2016 ballot.

Measure Z, a ¼ cent sales tax proposal, would have generated approximately \$8.5 million. Of that,

approximately \$5.5 million would have been available for land preservation. At the time, a funding stream of that size was estimated to be sufficient to be able to keep pace with the rate at which the most critically important open space lands were expected to come on the market over the 14-year term of the tax measure.

Measure Z fell just short of the two-thirds approval threshold required for dedicated tax measures. However, the public's interest in preserving our most important open space resources continues to grow.



The District is at a financial crossroads. If a dedicated and stable revenue stream can be obtained, the District will be able to significantly ramp up its open space preservation actions, and make substantial progress on the goals discussed in the previous section of this Update. Without additional revenues, the District will have little choice but to abandon most of its work protecting additional municipal and agricultural watershed lands, riparian and upland habitat, wildlife

corridors and viewsheds. In addition, no new parks and trails will be possible to serve an ever-increasing population; the District's capacity will be limited to completing the Committed Projects identified in this Update.

### Future Funding Needs and Options

First and foremost, the District needs to complete and then maintain the parks, trails, campgrounds and restoration projects that it has already started. With that as its base, this Update then projects what would be needed to meet broader open space goals: watershed protection, ecosystem health, environmental education and outdoor recreation.

For long-term financial planning purposes, this Update presents three scenarios:

Scenario One: Maintenance of Effort for Committed Projects

Scenario Two: Enhanced Progress

Scenario Three: Accelerated Preservation and Implementation

Table One provides details related to Scenario One, while Table Two compares the three scenarios.

### **Scenario One: Maintenance of Effort for Committed Projects**

Scenario One focuses on completing and then maintaining and operating Committed Projects. Committed Projects are those where the District has already made investments and has a physical presence on the ground, either through fee title ownership of the land or through operating agreements with other landowning agencies.

Scenario One assumes a continuation of the annual grant to the District that is derived from a portion of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax.

Table One presents current annual operating expenses and revenues for each of the District's Committed Projects. At present, the District spends \$1, 256,000 annually to maintain and operate the Districts

Committed Projects. Just under 50% of these expenses are to operate Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park. Because they have overnight accommodations, these two parks generate sufficient revenue to cover their current expenses as well as to gradually whittle away at the backlog of deferred maintenance the District inherited when assuming responsibility for the parks in 2012. Most of the District's other facilities do not have overnight accommodations and are available without user fees, so generate minimal revenues. Overall, current annual expenditures exceed operating revenues by \$545,000 (assuming no financial assistance from Napa County). Assuming the County's annual grant is \$1 million, after covering current expenses, the District has \$455,000 available annually for capital investments.

Table One also provides order of magnitude revenue and expense projections for each Committed Project at "buildout". "Buildout" is defined as the completion of planned capital improvements plus further land acquisitions necessary for the most efficient management of the Committed Projects. Finally, Table One estimates capital funding needs to reach Buildout.

As the District moves toward Buildout of the Committed Projects, each year more of the County grant funding that is currently available for capital projects will need to be dedicated for operations and maintenance, thereby slowing the rate of capital improvements. As a result, the completion of all of the Committed Projects is estimated to take as long as 60-plus years.

Under Scenario One, efforts to preserve Napa's natural landscapes will be severely limited. The 60-plus year estimate of the time needed to complete Committed Projects assumes the District undertakes no new projects. If new projects are started, less funding will be available to work on completing the Committed Projects.

Table One: Committed Projects: Financial Estimates

	current annual operating expenditures	current annual operating revenues	long-term annual expenditures	long-term annual revenues	buildout capital needs (construction)	buildout capital needs (land acquisition)
Napa River and Bay Trail	\$10,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$2,500,000	\$100,000
Napa River Ecological Reserve	\$11,000	\$0	\$11,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Oat Hill Mine Trail including northern extension	\$12,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000
Berryessa Vista Wilderness Park including access trails	\$1,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$300,000	\$500,000
Berryessa Peak Trail	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Moore Creek Park including Lake Hennessey	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$60,000	\$20,000	\$100,000	\$1,000,000
Camp Berryessa	\$25,000	\$16,000	\$40,000	\$30,000	\$2,500,000	\$0
Suscol Headwaters Preserve	\$5,000	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$0
Spanish Valley, Crystal Flats and Stone Corral	\$4,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$5,000	\$1,000,000	\$150,000
Smittle Creek Park	\$1,000	\$0	\$20,000	\$0	\$250,000	\$0
Vine Trail	\$1,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Mt Veeder (including Amy's Grove and The Cove)	\$60,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$5,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Wooddale	n/a	n/a	\$30,000	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000
Other Projects (including administration, insurance, legal obligations, public involvement, elections, fundraising, other project planning and implementation)	\$400,000	\$0	\$550,000	\$0	n/a	n/a
<b>Subtotal (not including State Parks)</b>	<b>\$581,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>	<b>\$872,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$8,650,000</b>	<b>\$3,750,000</b>
Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and Bale Grist Mill SHP	\$675,000	\$675,000	\$700,000	\$725,000	\$4,000,000	\$0
<b>Total (including State Parks)</b>	<b>\$1,256,000</b>	<b>\$711,000</b>	<b>\$1,572,000</b>	<b>\$785,000</b>	<b>\$12,650,000</b>	<b>\$3,750,000</b>

Years to complete capital improvements (excluding State Parks)

Net Annual	-\$545,000	-\$812,000
Annual grant from Napa County	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
County grant available for use on capital projects	\$455,000	\$188,000
Years to complete capital improvements (assuming no new non-county grants)	36	87

36      62 YEARS      87

Notes:

"Annual operating expenses" only covers operations, and does not include staff time associated with one-time capital improvement projects

"Buildout capital needs (construction)" includes improvements to complete only existing known objectives; for State Parks, 50% of the capital needs identified by State Parks are assumed to be paid for by State Parks, with the remainder funded by park revenues and other non-County grants

"Buildout capital needs (land acquisition)" includes only those acquisitions which are needed to provide logical boundaries to existing properties and trails.

"Years to complete" is calculated by dividing build-out capital needs by net current annual revenues (after current operating expenses are deducted); to calculate net revenues, net current revenues are averaged with net long-term revenues, to reflect the fact that how much funding is available to pay for buildout capital costs will decline as Committed Projects are completed.

"Years to complete..." excludes State Parks, since the State Parks are operated as an independent financial unit, and the County grant to the District cannot be used for State Park purposes

Revenues and expenses are not adjusted for inflation

State Parks are tracked separately from other projects because by County policy none of the County grant to the District may be used to support state facilities



Table Two: Comparison of Financial Scenarios (estimated annual revenues and expenses)

Scenario	Revenues					Expenses						
	TOT grant	program income (1)	other grants (3)	Potential new tax (6)	Total	operations and maintenance (1)	capital improvements (7)	wildfire management	enhanced outdoor education	land protection	support for city projects (2)	Total
Scenario One: Maintenance of Effort (Committed Projects)	\$1,000,000	\$748,000	\$375,000	\$0	\$2,123,000	\$1,414,000	\$500,000	\$0	\$0	\$209,000	0	\$2,123,000
Scenario Two: Enhanced Progress	\$1,000,000	\$1,288,000	\$1,000,000	\$9,600,000	\$12,888,000	\$2,164,000	\$1,000,000	\$350,000	\$750,000	\$6,704,000	\$1,920,000	\$12,888,000
Scenario Three: Accelerated Preservation (5)	\$1,000,000	\$1,288,000	\$1,000,000	\$19,200,000	\$22,488,000	\$2,914,000	\$1,500,000	\$350,000	\$750,000	\$13,134,000	\$3,840,000	\$22,488,000

Notes

- (1) For Scenario One, assumed to be the average of current and long-term projected income and expenses to reflect phase-in of new improvements  
For Scenarios Two and Three, O&M are calculated assuming the O&M cost for the current portfolio of projects plus an estimated \$50/acre for new acreage
- (2) For evaluation purposes only, assumed to be 20% of sales tax proceeds
- (3) Does not include value of donations of land, non-monetary goods and volunteer services. Other grants increase for Scenarios Two and Three because it's more feasible to obtain other grants for land acquisition than it is for operations and maintenance.
- (4) All numbers are in current dollars, with no adjustment for inflation
- (5) Additional lands aquired under Scenario Three over Scenario Two are assumed to be protected for habitat and watershed purposes but without active public use and facilities
- (6) Scenario Two assumes a 1/4 percent sales tax; Scenario Three assumes a 1/2 percent sales tax.
- (7) In Scenario One, the amount designated for capital improvements, extended over 15 years, will only complete about 40 % of existing known capital needs. The amounts indicated for Scenarios Two and Three would fund known capital needs over 15 years, and provide a setaside for potential future improvements.

## Scenario Two: Enhanced Progress

The District's top priority is to complete the Committed Projects. However, as reflected in the earlier discussion in this Master Plan Update, just completing the District's Committed Projects would leave many unique and irreplaceable open space lands unprotected, and many of Napa's existing public lands would continue to be unavailable to the public.

Scenario Two includes not only completion of the Committed Projects, but also assumes funding to protect watersheds, habitat and other high priority open space lands. Scenario Two assumes new funding equal to revenues that would be generated by a countywide one-quarter percent sales tax, in addition to a continuation of the annual grant that is derived from a portion of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax.

Scenario Two reflects the fact that to effectively preserve the most important open space lands, the District must be flexible and responsive when opportunities arise to acquire unique and important parcels of land. The District has no power of eminent domain, so can only acquire land from willing sellers. Critical open space lands only rarely come on the market; when they do, the District needs to do everything it can to acquire them. **Ideally, the District should have an annual funding stream that generates sufficient money to keep pace with the rate at which the most critical open space lands become available for sale.**

Vacant land values in Napa County vary widely, from a low of under \$1,000 per acre for the most remote sites, to a high of \$100,000 or more per acre for land that is permitted for vineyard development but not yet planted. For big picture planning purposes, a figure of \$5,000 per acre is a reasonable assumption of average land values. Using this figure, every \$1 million in District funds equals the ability to acquire 200 acres of land. For \$5 million in annual District revenues, each year approximately 1,000 acres of open space can be acquired and preserved in perpetuity. Scenario Two would generate \$6.7 million annually for open space preservation, and over 15 years would protect an

estimated 20,000 acres of forest, meadows, chaparral and riparian areas.

In its first 12 years, the District has protected a little over 400 acres of open space annually. That compares to several thousand acres of irreplaceable open space that come on the market each year, which means many conservation opportunities are being lost. Scenario Two would increase the District's ability to respond effectively to many but not all ongoing preservation opportunities.

In addition to increasing District capacity to protect land, Scenario Two also assumes increased District capacity to fill three other needs:

- Comprehensive Invasive Weed Management and Fuel Reduction. At present, weed management and fuel reduction efforts are limited to just a few District properties. For an estimated \$350,000 annually, the District could expand these efforts to all of the District's current and proposed lands.
- Outdoor Education Program. Providing one outdoor education field trip per year for all students in Napa County is preliminarily estimated to cost \$750,000. This includes the cost of bus transportation as well as curriculum development and trained guides. One outdoor field trip per year per student, while a modest goal, would represent a dramatic increase compared to the present; currently most students have no outdoor education experiences.
- Cooperative Partnership with city park and recreation programs. Recognizing that city park and recreation projects and programs complement those of the District, and that the public would benefit from adequate funding for the work of both the cities and the District, the District is interested in exploring the feasibility of joint funding. Scenario Two assumes that 20 percent of the revenues (\$1.9 million annually) that would be generated by a countywide one-quarter percent sales tax would be distributed to the four cities and one town within

Napa County to help implement their individual park and recreation plans.

**Scenario Three: Accelerated Preservation and Implementation.**

Scenario Three includes the completion of Committee Projects as described in Scenario One as well as the enhanced acquisition, land management and outdoor education work described in Scenario Two. It also assumes an accelerated open space preservation and implementation program.

Scenario Three assumes revenues equal to a one-half percent sales tax, in addition to a continuation of the annual grant that is derived from a portion of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax. Under Scenario Three, \$13.1 million would be available annually for land preservation. The additional revenues would enable the District to protect and manage an estimated nearly 40,000 acres of additional open space, or about 2,600 acres annually, which would more than likely be sufficient to keep up with normal market availability, with little risk of losing unique and irreplaceable resources to inappropriate development. This scenario assumes 20 percent of the new revenues (\$3.8 million) would be made available to the four cities and one town within Napa County to help implement their park and recreation goals. This scenario would also fund the wildfire management and enhanced outdoor education programs included in Scenario Two.

The three scenarios presented in this Master Plan Update represent three vastly different futures for the District and for the residents and visitors to Napa County. In presenting these three scenarios, the District hopes to stimulate discussion about which path to pursue, and to galvanize energy to achieve our desired future.



*Where there's a will there's a way*



# Appendix: Status of Other Projects and Programs

The District Master Plan adopted in 2009 contained four major goals and 61 projects for implementing those goals. The Plan noted that the list of projects was intended to demonstrate the full range of potential District activities, and that the list of projects would change as projects were completed, others were determined to be infeasible or of lower priority, and new opportunities and challenges presented themselves.

The Master Plan 2012 Update added seven new projects.

The 2019 Update classifies 14 of these projects as Committee Projects; these are discussed in the body of the 2019 Update. This Appendix provides a snapshot of the status of each of the other projects identified in the Master Plan and/or the Master Plan Update. Some of these projects have been completed, some have put on hold for various reasons, and some have not yet been initiated due to lack of financial and staffing capacity. Note that that project numbering and naming in this document generally follows the same structure as in the original Master Plan, but there is not always a direct correlation because some projects that were initially identified as separate projects have been revised and combined.

## **Goal A Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation through the development of a system of parks, trails, water resources, open space and related facilities.**

### **A.2 Milliken Creek Trails and Picnic Area Development**

The District completed a feasibility study for trails within the City of Napa’s Milliken reservoir property. Subsequent negotiations between City and District staff

resulted in conceptual agreement that the District would first work on opening trails on the north side of Lake Hennessey, since this area poses fewer operational challenges and potential water quality issues compared to the Milliken reservoir property. The District opened the first trails on the north shore of Lake Hennessey in 2014.

*Next Steps: In consultation with the City of Napa, re-evaluate the feasibility study for the Milliken Reservoir watershed after completion of the planned trail network at the Lake Hennessey Unit of Moore Creek Park (expected in 2019).*

### **A.4 Rector Ridge/Stags Leap Ridge Trail Development**

The project involves constructing a staging area and approximately 6 miles of Ridge Trail climbing Rector Ridge and past Stags Leap heading east from Silverado Trail near Rector Creek. This was designated to be part of the 550 mile planned Bay Area Ridge Trail, but with the Ridge Trail Council adoption of a “Go North” revision of the proposed alignment, this would be a spur trail to the main Ridge Trail. To move forward the project needs permission from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (the property owner) as well as California Fish and Wildlife Department (holder of an access easement to permit hunting). Staffing changes and internal challenges within the Department of Veterans Affairs have impeded past efforts.

*Next Steps: Restart discussion with the Department of Veteran Affairs (and the Veterans Home in Yountville) after other higher priority projects are completed.*

### **A.9 Newell Preserve Access Development**

When the Master Plan was first adopted, there was no public access to the City of American Canyon’s Newell Preserve. The District cooperated with the City in an attempt to develop a water source for the Preserve, and to obtain public access. The attempt to develop a water source has so far not been successful, but the City of American Canyon was successful in obtaining the necessary right of way and permits, and have

constructed a non-motorized pathway that provides public access.

*Next Steps: No further District action is proposed at this time.*

#### **A.10 Lake Berryessa Trail Development**

The District is broadly supportive of the Lake Berryessa Trail as proposed by the Bureau of Reclamation, and specifically those segments which will provide access to Berryessa Vista Wilderness Park as well as Camp Berryessa. In 2017 several miles of trail (the North Shore Trail) were constructed under the leadership of Tuleyome, a Woodland-based non-profit organization. This is a major benefit for Camp Berryessa, since the southern terminus of the trail is right at the entrance to the camp. The contractor who constructed the trail used Camp Berryessa as the staging area for equipment, staff and volunteers to work on the trail.

*Next Steps: Continue to support efforts by Reclamation and Tuleyome to construct more sections of the Lake Berryessa Trail, especially those serving Berryessa Vista.*

#### **A.13 Pope and Putah Creek Trail Development**

Development of a network of trails connecting existing Bureau of Land Management properties north of Pope Creek and west of Putah Creek was identified in the District Master Plan as an important goal. The value and feasibility of such a network increased dramatically with the District's acceptance of the 1,900 acre Spanish Valley property, which allows connections to multiple Bureau of Land Management parcels in the area.

*Next Steps: When and if easements can be obtained where the proposed trails cross private property, complete construction of the trail network in this area.*

#### **A.15 Camp Berryessa to Knoxville Recreation Area Trail Development**

Construction of a public trail between Camp Berryessa and the Knoxville Recreation Area would require the public acquisition of either fee title or trail easements

across several private parcels of land from willing sellers.

*Next Steps: Continue to look for opportunities to obtain needed rights of way across private property that separates existing public land holdings.*

#### **A.16 Napa Crest Trail Planning**

The concept of a Napa Crest Trail circumnavigating the Napa Valley was first proposed by the County in the 1970's. The concept was refined somewhat in the District Master Plan, and modified further to mirror the proposed alignment for the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The right of way for most of the 25 mile stretch between Lake Hennessey and Mt. St. Helena is under public or land trust ownership; open public access is already allowed on the public land sections, while "access after orientation" is allowed on the land trust section. The District is involved in intermittent discussions with Solano County and the City of Vallejo about the Vallejo Lakes section of the Napa Crest Trail straddling the Napa-Solano border.

*Next Steps: Continue to look for opportunities to obtain needed connections between existing public lands along the proposed Napa Crest Trail alignment, including Vallejo Lakes, between Moore Creek Park and Angwin, and in the Mayacamas Mountains between Sugarloaf State Park and Bothe-Napa Valley State Park.*

#### **A.17 Napa River Access Planning**

The District, in partnership with the City of American Canyon, has completed two river access points as part of the construction of the Napa River and Bay Trail west of American Canyon, as well as another river access next to the Highway 29 Butler Bridge. River access is also provided by the District at the Napa River Ecological Reserve on Yountville Crossroad.

*Next Steps:*

*(1) Continue to seek opportunities for providing more public access to the Napa River north of the City of Napa.*

*(2) Investigate the feasibility of providing fishing access to the Napa River south of the Butler Bridge adjacent to Napa Sanitation District property.*



### **A.19 Bay Area Ridge Trail Planning in Napa County**

At the urging of the District and the Land Trust of Napa County, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council in 2013 amended the proposed alignment for the Bay Area Ridge Trail to “Go North”, making it more consistent with the alignment for the proposed Napa Crest Trail. Instead of crossing the Napa Valley at the Yountville Crossroad, the alignment is now proposed to extend on the east side of the Napa Valley all the way north to the Oat Hill Mine Trail, with a spur trail continuing to the peak of Mt. St. Helena. In addition, the alignment now also follows the Oat Hill Mine Trail into Calistoga, and the Vine Trail south to Bothe-Napa Valley State Park. From Bothe-Napa Valley State Park the proposed alignment continues south (with no specific route yet identified) to Sugarloaf State Park before heading west across Sonoma County.

*Next Steps: Continue to monitor the proposed trail alignment for opportunities to obtain needed trail easements or fee title ownerships.*

### **A.21 River to Ridge Trail Encroachment Resolution**

In 2010, the District completed work on a lot line adjustment between Syar Quarry and the State of California in order to eliminate an encroachment of the River to Ridge Trail onto Syar property.

*Next Steps: Project completed. No further action needed.*

### **A.23 Napa River Water Trail Development**

In 2010 plans for a Napa River Water Trail, advanced by Friends of the Napa River and others, were greatly expanded by the adoption of a regional San Francisco Bay Water Trail plan by the Association of Bay Area Governments and the State Coastal Conservancy. Since then, the District initiated an effort to construct a new river access and boat launch on the west side of the Napa River, just south of the Highway 29 Butler Bridge; that project has been transferred to the City of Napa for implementation. The City of Napa has also completed a new boat dock just south of the Third Street Bridge, and the State Department of Fish and Wildlife has opened

river access for hand launched boats at their Napa Plant Site off Green Island Road.

*Next Steps: Continue to monitor and support the local and regional planning process, and be willing to take the lead on projects that need District involvement to succeed.*

### **A.24 Napa Valley Greenway/Vine Trail Development**

The non-profit Napa Valley Vine Trail Coalition was formed in 2008 to advocate for a Class I bicycle and pedestrian path between the Vallejo Ferry Terminal and the City of Calistoga. The District has an MOU with the Coalition to partner and provide support where appropriate. One member of the District Board sits on the Vine Trail Coalition Board. The District has worked with the Coalition in securing the right of way for the combined Vine Trail and Napa River and Bay Trail through the Napa Pipe property. The District has also completed 0.7 miles of the combined Vine Trail and Napa River and Bay Trail in the vicinity of the Buttler Bridge.

*Next Steps: Assist with obtaining permissions and constructing the Vine Trail segment that is proposed to run through Bothe-Napa Valley State Park.*

### **A.25 Henry Road/Milliken Peak Area Trail Development**

The Master Plan calls for a trail in the Henry Road/Milliken Peak area. Several possible routes have been investigated, but to date the District has not been able to securing the necessary right of way.

*Next Steps: Be prepared to reactivate this project if the opportunity arises to secure necessary right of way*

### **A.26 Countywide Trail Network Planning**

A conceptual countywide trail network was adopted as part of the Napa County General Plan Update in 2008 and further detailed in the District’s Master Plan adopted in 2009. Since that time, the alignment for the Vine Trail has been determined. In addition, the alignment for the other major regional trail in Napa County—the Bay Area Ridge Trail, was revised by the

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council at District request, to “Go North” up the east side of the Napa Valley to the Oat Hill Mine Trail, across the valley at Calistoga, and then west to Sonoma County using Bothe-Napa Valley State Park.

*Next Steps: Continue to implement the proposed trail network, and update the plan as circumstances dictate.*

## **GOAL B Preserve, restore and protect open space lands, natural resources and habitats**

### **B.2 Lake Berryessa Estates Open Space Preservation**

In 2009 the District submitted an application to the Bureau of Land Management requesting the no-fee transfer of two parcels totaling 480 acres. The transfer has been delayed because BLM discovered a problem with the title to the land that needs to be corrected. The problem affects several parcels next to Lake Berryessa. Completion of the transfer is important because of the land’s connection to the District’s adjacent 1,900 acre Spanish Valley property.

*Next Steps: Continue to encourage BLM to complete the transfer of the property.*

### **B.4 Vallejo Lakes and Lake Curry Preservation**

The City of Vallejo owns two reservoirs in Solano County (Lakes Madigan and Frey) along with approximately 2,000 acres of adjacent property (both watershed and non-watershed land), and one reservoir in Napa County (Lake Curry) along with approximately 7,087 acres of its watershed. The City over the past decade has been exploring options for selling the non-watershed lands, selling the Lake Curry property, and transferring the Madigan and Frey water supply obligations to a non-city water purveyor. The District has participated in discussions with the City of Vallejo, the Solano Land Trust, the Land Trust of Napa County and Solano County, with the goal of preserving the habitat and

water resources of these City properties, as well as providing appropriate public access.

*Next Steps: Continue to participate in discussions about Vallejo Lakes and Lake Curry and seek solutions that preserve the resource values of these areas*

### **B.5 South Napa Wetlands**

This area immediately west of the Napa River, between the river and Highway 29, was acquired and restored as tidal wetland by the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District as part of the “living river” flood control project. Initially the Flood Control District planned to transfer ownership of the property to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. When that proved problematic, the Flood District and the Napa Open Space District explored the option of having NOSD own and manage the property for limited public access. After researching the issue, the two Districts concluded that it made sense for the Flood District to retain ownership and management responsibilities.

*Next Steps: At such time as the City of Napa decides what to do with the upland property they own immediately northwest of the South Napa Wetlands, NOSD should investigate with them the potential for developing of a wetland overlook platform.*

### **B.6 Linda Falls Conservation Easement**

When the Land Trust of Napa County obtained ownership of the main parcel of land that includes Linda Falls in 2008, they donated a conservation easement over the property to NOSD. After the Land Trust subsequently obtained fee title to two adjacent parcels, the Land Trust revised the conservation easement to include all 176 acres owned by the Land Trust.

*Next Steps: Continue to monitor the easement to ensure conservation values are preserved.*

### **B.7 Palisades Cooperative Management Plan Development**

The District participated in a process led by the Land Trust of Napa County to develop a cooperative management plan for the public properties in the



Palisades area between Angwin and Mt. St. Helena. The final plan provides a framework for future cooperative efforts involving the Land Trust, California State Parks, NOSD, the Bureau of Land Management and the State Lands Commission. In 2017 the Land Trust obtained a conservation easement over more than 7,000 acres of the adjacent private Montesol ranch, which dramatically expands the overall protected area.

*Next Steps: Continue to work with partner agencies and the Land Trust to cooperatively manage the area.*

### **B.8 Skyline Park Protection and Master Plan Development**

The County adopted an updated Master Plan for Skyline Park in 2009, and at the same time revised the zoning to be consistent with the General Plan. Both actions strengthened legal protections for the park. At the request of the County, in 2010 the State authorized sale of the property to the County, but the State and County were unable to agree on a price.

*Next Steps: Continue to advocate for permanent protection of all of Skyline Park as a public park through acquisition from the State.*

### **B.10 Other High Priority Habitats Protection**

NOSD worked with the Association of Bay Area Governments, the County of Napa, the Napa Valley Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to designate Priority Conservation Areas (PCA's) within Napa County. PCA's are areas of high biological or recreational value deserving of permanent protection through acquisition of fee title ownership and/or conservation easements. The Suscol Headwaters Preserve was NOSD's first major acquisition resulting from the PCA program, with funding from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans, Napa Valley Transportation Authority, Solano Transportation Agency and the State Coastal Conservancy.

*Next Steps: Continue to monitor for opportunities to protect high priority conservation properties in Napa County.*

### **B.12 Maple Springs Transfer**

In 2009 the District applied for a no-fee transfer of Maple Springs from the Bureau of Land Management to the District pursuant to the federal Recreation and Public Purpose Act. District ownership of the parcel would facilitate management of the Oat Hill Mine Trail, as well as enable the District to provide back country camping. However, due to staffing shortages at BLM, this transfer has taken a back seat to the Lake Berryessa Estates BLM parcel transfer.

*Next Steps: Restart the transfer application once BLM completes the Lake Berryessa Estates BLM parcel transfer.*

### **B.15 Montesol Phase II**

In 2016 the Trust for Public Land in partnership with the Land Trust of Napa County purchased a conservation easement over more than 7,000 acres of the Montesol property north and east of Mt. St. Helena, protecting a very diverse landscape of douglas fir forest, oak woodlands, grasslands, chaparral and unique rock outcrops. As part of the easement purchase, TPL also negotiated an option to purchase in fee title 1,254 acres of the conservation easement area, located west of Highway 29, with the intent of transferring ownership to the District, so that it could be managed in a coordinated way with Robert Louis Stevenson State Park.

The District succeeded in obtaining a grant to close the funding gap needed to complete the acquisition. Unfortunately, the landowner, TPL and the District were unable to come to agreement on insurance details related to carbon credits that the landowner had previously sold to the State of California. As a result, the option expired. Going forward, the area's natural resources will be protected through the conservation easement, but there will be no public access.

## **GOAL C Provide historical, cultural and environmental education programs**

### **C.2 Napa River Ecological Reserve Environmental Education Program Development**

During 2010 and 2011, the District sponsored field trips for elementary, middle and high school students to visit the Reserve, learn about the ecology, and assist with the removal of invasive plants in the entryway meadow, utilizing a specific grant for that purpose. With the ending of the grant, these field trips ended. The District, in partnership with the Napa County Resource Conservation District, used another grant to develop a curriculum guide keyed to California educational standards, so that individual teachers and their classes can visit and learn about the Reserve without the need for outside experts. In 2017 the District was able to obtain new grant funding to support field trips.

*Next Steps: Continue and expand field trips and nature walks at the Napa River Ecological Reserve*

### **C.3 Napa River to Ridge Trail Interpretive Path Development**

Approximately 1,000 feet of the River to Ridge Trail, immediately east of Soscol Avenue, runs between parallel chain-link fences. To make this section of trail more inviting, the District had life-size silhouettes of animals that can be seen in Skyline Park fabricated and installed by an Eagle Scout candidate. In 2012 the District installed an information kiosk at the entrance to the River to Ridge Trail.

*Next Steps: Consider developing a smart phone-based audio tour for the River to Ridge Trail, including information on the Bay Area Ridge Trail and SF Bay Trail.*

### **C.4 Rector Ridge Trail Interpretive Path Development**

When constructed, the Rector Ridge Trail will offer great potential for interpreting the history and development of the Napa Valley, including water supply, the Veterans Home and the wine industry.

*Next Steps: No action needed until the District is able to secure permission to construct the trail.*

### **C.5 Napa River and Bay Trail Interpretive Path Development**

As part of the construction of the Napa River and Bay Trail in and near American Canyon, the District prepared and installed eight interpretive stations, discussing topics ranging from wastewater treatment, solid waste landfills, salt production, wetlands restoration and Native American use of the area. Then in 2014, in partnership with the SF Bay Trail Project and a private software developer, the interpretive information was turned into a smart phone-based app.

*Next Steps: Publicize the availability of the smart phone interpretive app.*

### **C.6 South Napa Wetlands Habitat Interpretive Facilities and Programming Development**

With the decision of the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to retain ownership of the South Napa Wetlands, development of interpretive facilities and programming at this location has become a less pressing concern. The best location for a waterfowl observation deck is accessed from City of Napa property; until the City prepares a master plan for this site, the District cannot proceed with the observation deck.

*Next Steps: No action is needed until the City of Napa completes planning for its property in this area.*

### **C.7 Huichica Creek Wetlands Interpretive Path Development**

This project is inactive because of uncertainty about the legality of the public access route to the Huichica Creek Wetlands, which are managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

*Next Steps: No further District action needed at this point.*

### **C.8 Oat Hill Mine Trail Interpretive Path Development**

The District has provided on its web page copies of a self-guided geology tour as well as two articles on native plants.

*Next Steps:*

- (1) Consider the feasibility of developing a smart phone-based interpretive app for the Oat Hill Mine Trail.*
- (2) If the Oat Hill Mine Trail is opened to the public north of Aetna Springs, design and install interpretive materials describing the history of the Twin Peaks, Corona and Oat Hill mercury mines.*

## **GOAL D Provide for District management and partnerships**

### **D.1 Develop and Implement a Multiyear Budget and Service Plan**

The 2012 Master Plan Update included the District's first look at multi-year service and budget projections. That analysis was refined as part of the work of the Park and Open Space District Advisory Committee, and presented in the committee's Final Report issued in 2015. The 2019 Master Plan Update further refines these projections.

*Next Steps: Continue to update and refine the multiyear budget and service plan*

### **D.2 Develop Public Information Program**

The District completed a major overhaul of its web site in 2016, built around a trip finder mapping tool. In 2016 the District also launched a monthly newsletter. District

volunteers and staff also maintain a facebook page. In 2017 the District sponsored a series of articles in the local newspaper written by a high school student featuring District parks and trails. In the spring of 2017 the District received \$50,000 in grants to increase public outreach. Half of these funds have been allocated to expanded youth outdoor education, with the rest available for more traditional public information channels.

*Next Steps:*

- (1) Continue to maintain and upgrade the web site*
- (2) Continue and expand youth outdoor education*
- (3) Expand use of Instagram, Facebook and other social media*

### **D.3 Consider Establishing Non-Profit Foundation**

Since 2012 the District has partnered with the Napa Valley State Park Association in raising donations and obtaining grants. The District continues to evaluate the merits of forming its own non-profit foundation to encourage more local giving. A foundation is not needed legally, since donations to the District are tax-deductible just like those to non-profit organizations, but having a foundation could potentially encourage more support. At the same time, foundations require considerable staff time, an active Board, and a unique positioning in the community if they are to be effective.

*Next Steps:*

- (1) Continue to partner with the Napa Valley State Park Association, the Land Trust of Napa County and other non-profit organizations where feasible.*

### **D.4 Consider Forming District Advisory Committee**

Given the small size of the District and the direct involvement of staff and board members with volunteers and others in the community, the Board of Directors has concluded a formal standing advisory committee is not needed. That said, in 2014-15 the District convened a Park and Open Space Advisory Committee for the specific purposes of (a) evaluating the District's track record, (b) advising the District on what more it could and should be doing, and (c)



recommending strategies for funding the District's future. The committee was disbanded in 2015 after releasing its Final Report.

*Next Steps: Consider establishing an oversight committee as part of any new ballot measure for funding the District.*

#### **D.5 Establish Partnerships with Public Art, Historical and Cultural Interpretation Organizations**

In 2011 the District was awarded recognition by Napa County Landmarks for helping to preserve Napa County's historic landscapes. Starting in 2012 the District entered into a partnership to preserve and operate the Bale Grist Mill and the Visitor Center, pioneer cemetery and other resources at Bothe-Napa Valley State Park.

*Next Steps: Continue to seek creative partnerships that can result in public art being incorporated into the District's parks.*

#### **D.6 Develop Volunteer Participation**

Between its formation at the beginning of 2007 up through the end of 2018, the District organized 96,300 hours of volunteer support, valued at just over \$1.9 million. Volunteers work constructing, repairing and maintaining trails, installing fences and gates, repairing buildings, removing trash, controlling invasive weeds, planting native trees and shrubs, biological inventories, planning studies, boundary surveys, and serving as camp and mill hosts.

*Next Steps: Continue to manage and expand volunteer programs.*

#### **D.7 Prepare and Adopt District Purchasing and Contracting Policies and Procedures**

Contracting policies and procedures were adopted by the District Board in 2010. Since then minor changes have been made to keep current with federal, state and local laws and regulations.

*Next Steps: Continue to monitor changes in federal, state and local laws and regulations and update District policies and procedures as appropriate.*

#### **D.8 Prepare and Adopt District Policies and Ordinances for Public Use of Facilities**

As a public agency, the District has the authority to adopt and enforce ordinances establishing policies for use of District facilities. However, the District has so far not had the need to do so, instead successfully relying on information and education to protect District resources and maintain public safety. The exception is the State Parks operated by the District, where State Park regulations and policies apply.

*Next Steps: Continue to evaluate the need for the District to adopt enforceable regulations that go beyond existing county, state and federal regulations.*

#### **D.9 Adopt Policies and Develop Partnership, Sponsorship and Donation Programs for the Use and Promotion of District Facilities**

In 2008 the District adopted policies related to donations for the Oat Hill Mine Trail, but which applies to all District donations. The policy allows small acknowledgement plaques to be placed on benches, kiosks and other donated furnishings. The District has received a few inquiries from businesses potentially interested in partnering on "green burial" and memorial grove programs, but to date none have been sufficiently related to the District's core mission to be worth pursuing. At the State Parks, the District must follow State Park policies related to sponsorships and affiliations; these rules prohibit the placement in State Parks of most visible forms of acknowledgement for donations.

The District regularly donates to non-profit organizations throughout Napa County by offering free or discounted use of cabins, yurts and campsites as raffle and auction prizes at their fundraising events.

*Next Steps: Continue to be open to proposals for partnerships, sponsorship and donation programs in conjunction with other agencies, organizations and businesses (ongoing).*

#### **D.10 Consider Development of Deputized Ranger Capacity**

Having a deputized ranger program requires extensive organization, training and expense, as well as added liability. The District therefore decided to not pursue the establishment of a deputized ranger program as long as other approaches (education, monitoring, partnerships with various interest groups and cooperation with the County Sheriff) remain effective.

Between 2012 and the end of 2016, the District contracted with State Parks to keep one of the State Park rangers who had been working at Bothe for many years to be the District Park Manager for Bothe-Napa Valley State Park and the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park. During that time, having a deputized ranger was sometimes useful but never really essential, since the few times that there were issues the County Sheriff provided assistance.

*Next Steps:*

*(1) Continue staff training in voluntary compliance and “verbal judo” techniques*

*(2) Continue to monitor park and trail use, and reevaluate whether to develop a deputized ranger capacity if needed for public safety or resource protection*

#### **D.11 Prepare and Adopt Green Standards for Buildings and Operations**

The District has used the development of Moore Creek Park and Camp Berryessa as learning opportunities for developing and demonstrating green building practices. These have included such techniques as using composting toilets (the District got Napa County to revise environmental health standards to allow for composting toilets and gray water systems) and engineered septic systems to protect water quality, installing solar panels, milling fallen timber to make benches, and reusing a dismantled stone bridge.

The 2012 Master Plan Update included a plan to compile a Green Standards for Buildings and Operations. However, District experience since then

has been that each site is unique, and solutions that work at one site are not appropriate at another site. Therefore, rather than the District compiling formal Green Standards, it makes more sense to continue to rely on industry-wide approaches such as the LEED rating system, together with a conscious effort with every construction project to look for ways to increase use of local materials, reduce energy consumption and protect natural resources.

*Next Steps: Continue to apply green building principles to all District projects, and adjust approaches as more experience is gained*

#### **D.12 Develop and Implement Cooperative Strategies for Habitat Restoration**

The District has worked informally but closely with the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Napa County Resource Conservation District, the City of Napa, the Land Trust of Napa County and Tuleyome. Projects have included native plant restoration along Moore Creek, invasive plant removal at the Napa River Ecological Reserve and at Moore Creek, removal of fish barriers on Ritchie Creek, and mercury mine remediation in the James Creek watershed.

*Next Steps: Continue to work cooperatively with other local agencies and organizations to restore critical habitats in Napa County*

#### **D.13 Update Countywide Inventory of Protected Open Space Lands**

Since 2009, the Countywide inventory of protected open space lands has been updated every 1-2 years. The current inventory was updated in early 2017.

*Next Steps: Continue to update the inventory of protected open space lands every 1-2 years*

#### **D.14 Update District Master Plan**

The District’s first Master Plan was adopted in January 2009. This plan called for periodic reviews and updates as needed to ensure the plan is current and useful for guiding the strategic direction of the District. An update to the Master Plan was adopted by the Board in 2012.

*Next Steps: Adopt this update to the Master Plan in early 2019, and the next update in three to five years*

**D.15 Establish Partnerships with Land Conservation and Public Recreation Organizations and Agencies**

The District has entered into several formal partnerships with other land conservation and public recreation organizations and agencies, including (a) an MOU with the Land Trust of Napa County that lays out ways the two entities will cooperate, (b) an MOU with the Vine Trail Coalition, (c) a partnership agreement with the Napa Valley State Parks Association for fundraising, events and operations at the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park and Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, and (d) membership in the Bay Area Open Space Council.

*Next Steps:*

*(1) Complete backup easement for the District's Spanish Valley property, to be held by the Land Trust of Napa County (2019).*

*(2) Continue to seek new and strengthened partnerships with other agencies and organizations with compatible missions.*

**D.16 Prepare and adopt Habitat Stewardship Guidelines**

The District Master Plan contains a list of principles for guiding District stewardship activities. Key among these is the concept of adaptive management. This approach to management recognizes that each location is different, and techniques that work in one location may not work as well in another location. At the State Parks managed by the District, habitat stewardship guidelines are dictated by State Parks. At the Suscol Headwaters Preserve, habitat management guidelines are codified in the grant agreement between the District, Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At the Napa River and Bay Trail, habitat management is the responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the City of American Canyon.

*Next Steps:*

*(1) Develop baseline conditions and approve habitat management guidelines for Spanish Valley as part of a backup conservation easement to be held by the Land Trust of Napa County (2019).*

*(2) Develop a grazing plan for Moore Creek Park, if there is interest from one or more ranchers.*