



NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

BAHIA RIDGE FIRE ROAD AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT RUSH CREEK OPEN SPACE PRESERVE NOVATO, CALIFORNIA

April 19, 2021

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) is proposing a trail project at the Rush Creek Open Space Preserve and has prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The purpose of this Notice of Intent to Adopt an MND (NOI) is to initiate the 30-day public review and comment period for the IS/MND. Due to restrictions associated with COVID-19, hardcopies of the IS/MND are not available for review at the MCOSD administrative office, the local library, or other physical locations. The IS/MND and the online comment form is available for review on the Marin County Parks website at: [Rush Creek](#).

The comment period is April 19, 2021 through May 21, 2021.

Online comment submittal is preferred, but comments can also be submitted by email or mail as follows:

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Marin County Open Space District; 3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 260; San Rafael, CA 94903

PROJECT TITLE: Bahia Ridge Fire Road and Trail Improvement Project

PROJECT LOCATION: Rush Creek Open Space Preserve, Novato, CA

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT. The purpose of the proposed project is to implement the MCOSD Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) to provide the public with a safe multi-use trail system to enhance the visitor experience, reduce the environmental impacts of fire roads and trails on sensitive resources by reducing sedimentation and erosion, and establish a sustainable system of roads and trails that meet design and management standards and provide year-round access. The proposed project would close/decommission numerous existing social trails and realign and construct new trails at Rush Creek Open Space Preserve, as summarized below and fully described in the Project Description section of the IS/MND. The proposed project would result in a sustainable trail network in the southeast portion of the Preserve from both a soil stability and trail maintenance standpoint.

Blue Oak Trail. A new 3,410-foot multi-use system trail would be constructed to connect the Bahia Ridge Fire Road and the Bahia Trail. The new trail would replace an existing social trail network that would be decommissioned and restored to more natural conditions. Social trails in the area of the new Blue Oak Trail would be decommissioned because they are located in sensitive areas, are steep and chronically eroding, or are altering natural hillslope drainage. The decommissioned trails range from 8 to 35 percent gradients, and the proposed Blue Oak Trail would generally follow natural contours with permanent drainage controls installed.

Iron Gate Trail. A new 1,680-foot multi-use trail would be constructed to provide access from Bahia Drive to the Bahia Ridge Trail. The upper 680-foot section of the Iron Gate Fire Road would be converted to a 5-foot-wide multi-use trail and the lower 500 feet of the Iron Gate Fire Road would be decommissioned. The Iron Gate Trail would be constructed with less than 7 percent grades to replace the steep and eroding fire road. The decommissioned fire road is redundant and not needed for emergency access; emergency vehicle access would continue to take place along Bahia Ridge Fire Road.

Horseman's Spur Trail. An existing 1,370-foot social trail would be decommissioned, and the new 970-foot Horseman's Spur Trail would be constructed to provide a sustainable equestrian access from the Novato Horsemen's Association property to the Iron Gate Trailhead. The new trail would generally parallel the Horsemen's property line and then travel along the flat street frontage adjacent to Bahia Drive to the Iron Gate Trailhead. The Horsemen's Spur Trail is proposed as an equestrian and hiking only trail.

Bahia Berm Trail. The Bahia Berm Trail is an existing social trail that parallels Bahia Drive, extending from the Bahia Ridge Fire Road gate to the trailhead of the Bahia Trail. The 1,375-foot Bahia Berm Trail would be upgraded to improve drainage, and the trail would be for hiking-only.

The IS/MND identified potentially significant environmental impacts to Biological Resources, and mitigation measures to reduce the significance of these impacts to a less-than-significant level are included in the IS/MND. The IS/MND concludes that, with implementation of the mitigation measures, the proposed project would not have significant environmental impacts.

If you have any questions or need more information, contact Jason Hoorn at jhoorn@marincounty.org.