



Notice of Categorical Exemption

To: San Mateo County Clerk
County of San Mateo
555 County Center, First Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

From: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Project Title: Proposed Purchase of Property as an addition to Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

Project Location: 1000 Verde Road, in the vicinity of the City of Half Moon Bay (Assessor’s Parcel Number 066-280-052)

City: Unincorporated area

County: San Mateo

Description of Project: This Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) project consists of the purchase an undivided 33% interest (representing a 3.45-acre area, including an existing residence) in the 611.7-acre South Cowell Property as an addition to the District’s Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve and concurrent adoption of an amendment to the existing Preliminary Use and Management (PUMP) for the 375.45-acre Upland portion of the South Cowell Property. The PUMP establishes a status quo land management approach, with no expansion or changes to its existing uses of agricultural lands and natural habitat. The District previously purchased an undivided 54% interest in the South Cowell Property in 2020 (representing the 372-acre Upland area).

The Property is within the boundaries of the District’s Service Plan for the San Mateo County Coastal Annexation Area. The Service Plan and the Service Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), certified in 2004, includes policies, guidelines, and mitigations to ensure compatibility with the County General Plan and Local Coastal Program. The actions proposed will be conducted in compliance with the Service Plan and FEIR.

Any minor erosion and sediment control measures, infrastructure repair and maintenance, wildland fuel management, and resource management activities implemented by the District or tenants as part of the PUMP will be conducted in accordance with the District’s approved Resource Management Policies and related FEIR, the adopted Wildland Fire Resiliency Program and related FEIR, Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program and related Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), and in accordance with applicable regulatory permits. Any invasive species control will be conducted in accordance with the District’s adopted Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policies and IPM Program Guidance Manual and related FEIR, and the Open Space Maintenance and Restoration Program and related MND.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Same as above

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption

Section 15301 – Repair, maintenance, and minor alteration of existing facilities

Section 15316 - Transfer of Ownership of Land in Order to Create Parks

Section 15325 - Transfer of Ownership of Interest in land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

Section 15301 exempts the operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond the existing uses. The Amended PUMP will maintain the Property as status quo with no expansion or changes to its existing uses as a residence and agricultural and open space lands. The Amended PUMP includes maintenance of the existing infrastructure as necessary, as well as maintenance of or minor alterations to the property for wildland fuel management and other natural resource management activities in accordance with the District's adopted policies and programs and their associated CEQA documents.

Section 15316 exempts the acquisition of land in order to create parks if the land is in a natural condition, and the management plan proposes to keep the area in a natural condition. The Amended PUMP for the Property specifies that the land will remain in a natural condition and will be designated as an addition to the District's Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

Section 15325 exempts (a) acquisition or transfer of ownership to preserve existing natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats, (b) acquisition or transfer of ownership to allow continued agricultural uses, and (f) acquisition or transfer of ownership to preserve open space. The proposed purchase will transfer a portion of ownership of the Property to the District to ensure that its existing natural conditions will be preserved, will allow for the existing agricultural and grazing uses to continue, and preserve the Upland portion of the Property as part of the District's Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve.

In addition, none of the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2 apply to this project.

Lead Agency Contact Person:

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Attachments: Location Map

Signature: *Aaron Peth*

Date: 4/13/2022

Aaron Peth, Real Property Planner III