



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR
ROAD AND TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN PROJECT**

February 1, 2011

Marin County Open Space District (“District”) will be preparing a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) for environmental review of a new Road and Trail Management Plan (“RTMP”) to guide management of the roads and trails located on District owned Open Space Preserves located throughout Marin County (see attached map, Figure 1). The EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts and alternatives for the proposed RTMP project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). The EIR will focus on the existing road and trail network, as well as evaluate impacts and alternatives of changes to the existing network, that may include, but are not limited to: 1) maintenance of the existing road and trail network, 2) additions to the existing road and trail network, 3) decommissioning of specific segments of roads and/or trails, and 4) changes to visitor use of the road and trail network. The District lands for the proposed project are more specifically identified with Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (see attached table). The District has undertaken several studies of the road and trail network to establish baseline conditions as well as visitor use patterns. The results of these preliminary studies contribute to establishing the existing condition of the network for the EIR. This Notice of Preparation is being circulated to solicit public and agency comments on the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIR for the project, which is further described below.

Background

Since its inception in 1972, the District has acquired nearly 16,000 acres of land that include an extensive network of unpaved roads and trails. The network currently consists of more than 200 miles of former ranch roads, fire protection roads, former logging roads, shared use trails, narrow trails, and social or unsanctioned trails. The road and trail network has expanded over time as the District has acquired more land and more public trail easements, and built new trails for recreational use. The system has also expanded as a consequence of new trails that developed as a result of long time, informal use, and with the creation of new trails, without authorization from the District. As a result, and due to the deterioration of some roads and trails over time, maintenance of the network has become increasingly challenging. And lastly, with the increase in use have come conflict among user groups in particular parts of the network.

The nearly 16,000 acres owned and managed by the District are contained within 34 Open Space Preserves in Marin County. Three of these Preserves (i.e., Bolinas Lagoon, and Bothin Marsh), are not included in the RTMP study area as they do not contain roads or trails. The District maintains 200

signed, accessible trailheads and approximately 203 miles of roads and trails. The Open Space Preserves draw users from Marin County and the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

To address these issues, and more specifically, to address the resource impacts associated with the road and trail network (e.g., erosion and sedimentation, habitat fragmentation, vegetation management, the spread of invasive weeds, and conflicts among users), the District has elected to undertake the development of a RTMP that will provide a comprehensive approach to the management of the District's roads and trails.

Project Description

In addition to the background studies mentioned above, the District has initiated a comprehensive community outreach and public involvement program that will be ongoing throughout the planning and CEQA review process. Requests for Qualifications ("RFQ"), and Requests for Proposals ("RFP") from qualified private partners will assist the District in work on both the RTMP and the EIR. The District has decided to prepare a Program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15168, to study the environmental impacts of the overall program of road and trail management to be included in the RTMP. Subsequent discretionary decisions by the District regarding implementation of the RTMP will tier from, and rely upon the Program EIR. The nature and extent of CEQA review for any future decisions regarding the RTMP implementation, however, will be determined at the time those decisions are proposed.

The overarching goals and objectives of the RTMP are as follows:

GOALS

- 1) To reduce the impact of the road and trail network on riparian areas, wetlands, environmentally sensitive habitats and special status plant and animal species, and streams.
- 2) To align the road and trail network with the District's maintenance and enforcement capacity.
- 3) To provide an appropriate range of experiences for visitors.
- 4) To address visitor use opportunities and address visitor conflict issues.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Identify which roads and trails should be officially recognized by the District.
- 2) Implement Best Management Practices in the management and maintenance of roads and trails.
- 3) Devise an approach for managing system roads and trails on District lands.

A comprehensive public outreach and participation program will be undertaken to elicit input and synthesize data to inform the planning policies and strategies developed for the RTMP.

Pursuant to state and local guidelines implementing CEQA, please be advised that the District will be the lead agency for the project. The District has determined that a full scope EIR is required for the project. Therefore pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d) an Initial Study has not been prepared. The EIR will focus on the following topical issues:

1) Aesthetics/Visual Quality	6) Transportation/Traffic/Circulation	11) Air Quality
2) Biological Resources	7) Agriculture & Forestry Resources	12) Geology/Soils
3) Greenhouse Gas Emissions	8) Hazards	13) Hydrology/Water Quality
4) Land Use/Planning	9) Mineral Resources	14) Noise
5) Cultural Resources	10) Public Services	15) Social & Economic Effects Related to Physical Impacts
16) Recreation		

To ensure that the EIR for this project is thorough and adequate, fully addresses public concerns and meets the needs of all agencies reviewing it, we are soliciting comments on specific issues to be included in the environmental review. Public comments on the scope of issues to be evaluated in the EIR are encouraged to be submitted in writing to the District during the 30 day comment period provided in this notice.

Please submit your written comments to Elise Holland, Planning and Resources Chief, Marin County Parks and Open Space Department, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 260, San Rafael, CA 94903-4157 by the comment period ending date March 3, 2011. Comments by FAX or E-mail may not be able to be confirmed as officially received and accepted before the end of the comment period deadline. **Commentors are advised to mail written comments postmarked on or before March 1, 2011.** Please note that a scoping session for public agencies, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies, as well as the general public, will be held on Tuesday, February 15th, from 3pm to 7:30 pm in the Manzanita Room, Marin Center, 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael, CA 94903. Questions about the environmental review process or about the project should be directed to Elise Holland, Planning and Resources Chief, and RTMP/EIR Project Manager, at eholland@co.marin.ca.us or (415) 507-2820.

1/27/11

Linda Dahl
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 Marin County Open Space District

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION-MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT'S ROADS AND TRAILS
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT OWNS AND MANAGES 34 OPEN SPACE PRESERVES LOCATED
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY OF MARIN**

FIGURE 1



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION-MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT'S ROADS AND TRAILS
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

FIGURE 2

**MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT LANDS ARE USED BY VISITORS FROM THROUGHOUT THE SAN
FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

