AGENDA SHORT TITLE: Approval of Grant Agreements with State Coastal Conservancy to provide funds for design and planning of trails on the East Slope of Sonoma Mountain and at Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve.

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION: Adopt a resolution of the Board of Directors, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, authorizing the General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to enter into a grant agreement with the California State Coastal Conservancy for funds to design and plan a trail on the East Slope of Sonoma Mountain, and to enter into a grant agreement with the California State Coastal Conservancy for funds to design and plan a trail at the Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve, and approving the terms and conditions of both grant agreements.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES: ADDITIONAL FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL:

Estimated Cost $155,000.00 Contingencies
Amount Budgeted $55,000.00 (Fund Name:)
Other Available Appropriations $0 Unanticipated Revenue $100,000.00
(Explain Below) Other Transfers (Source: State Coastal Conservancy)

Additional Requested $100,000.00 Additional Funds Requested $100,000.00

Explanation (if required): The budget adjustment will be submitted for Board approval during the January, 2012 consolidated budget adjustment process.

Prior Board Action: East Slope Trail: In 1995, the Board approved acquisition of a conservation easement over the Freiberg/Henshaw (now Arbit) properties, totaling 203 acres. In 1997, the Board approved purchase of a Conservation Easement over the 287-acre McCrea (now Maria Hansen Trust) property. In 2004, the District accepted the donation of a conservation easement over the Eliot property, totaling 71 acres. In March of 2010, approximately 22 acres of the Maria Hansen Trust property was conveyed in fee to the District through settlement agreement.

Calabazas Creek Preserve: In 2004, the Board approved acquisition of Beltane Ranch (now known as Calabazas Creek) Preserve as a future addition to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.

Alternatives – Results of Non-Approval: Grant funding will not be accepted or utilized for the design and planning of the East Slope Sonoma Mountain trail or Calabazas Creek Preserve projects.
Background:

Several of the properties that the District holds in fee were acquired with the intention of providing regional recreational benefits. Previously, the District successfully competed for trail project implementation funding available from the State Coastal Conservancy (designated for segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail) for the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail project. The District recently was awarded trail project planning funds for both the East Slope Trail and the Calabazas Preserve projects.

On March 17, 2011, the Conservancy Board approved $55,000 in funding for the East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail project. These funds were included in the District’s adopted 2011-2012 budget. Funds will support planning and design of the project, proposed as a segment of the Ridge Trail. The 6,800 linear foot trail will cross three private properties and one property held in fee by the District. Trail easements will be developed by the District with all private landowners. The trail will connect with Jack London State Historic Park and ultimately to Petaluma Adobe State Park, the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail, and other publicly held lands. It is anticipated that project planning will be completed by summer of 2012.

On September 22, 2011, the Conservancy Board approved $100,000 in funding for the Calabazas Preserve project. These funds were not included in the District’s 2011-2012 budget, and so a budgetary adjustment is required. Funds will support the planning and design of a 6-mile long trail system which includes a proposed segment of the Ridge Trail. The trail will connect the Sonoma Valley floor to the Ridge Trail along the rim of the Mayacamas Mountains. It is anticipated that project planning will be completed by early 2013.

Both projects aim to document the planning and community engagement process as a model for a cost-effective, resource-sensitive, community-based approach to trail development that integrates biodiversity protection.

Attachments:
1. Regional Maps of Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve Trail Plan and East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project
2. Resolution

On File With Clerk:
Grant application packages and grant agreements for Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve Trail Plan and East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail