



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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Marin County Parks and Open Space District
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03/16/2026

SHELLY SCOTT

MARIN COUNTY CLERK

By A.Oxlaj Arevalo Deputy

21-2026-044

Marin County Clerk
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 255
San Rafael, CA 94903

DATE: March 16, 2026
PROJECT TITLE: REED RANCH FIRE ROAD MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR
PROJECT LOCATION: Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve, Corte Madera, Marin County, CA
ASSESSORS' PARCEL(S): 038-182-37

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of the Project: The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) is proposing the Reed Ranch Fire Road Maintenance and Repair Project, the purpose of which is to repair the existing Reed Ranch Fire Road to remediate chronic road-related erosion, sedimentation, and trampling impacts to native plant communities. The primary goals are to prevent road surface erosion, reduce sedimentation loss and washout onto vegetation, prevent the trampling of native plant communities, and maintain emergency vehicle access.

Project Area Existing Conditions: Reed Ranch Fire Road is a mid-slope fire road¹ that intercepts and diverts hillslope runoff from natural flow paths. It is approximately 2,000 feet in length with an average width of 15 feet. The road lacks sufficient drainage features to convey runoff out of the road corridor. A low berm, approximately one-foot high by 2-feet wide, has formed along most of the outboard side of Reed Ranch Fire Road due to surface compaction, downgrading over time, and decades of sediment buildup along the edge. This berm prevents runoff from draining off the surface and has resulted in gullies, roadbed saturation, and muddy conditions. Poor drainage conditions has resulted in accelerated erosion, sediment transport, and deposition of road surface materials which are impacting adjacent sensitive plant communities. Without repair, these saturation, erosion, and sediment impacts would continue, which could prevent emergency vehicle access to Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve and could further degrade native plant communities as hikers avoid wet, muddy sections and trample sensitive native vegetation.

Vegetation in the project area is relatively dense and composed of a mixture of native and non-native grassland species. Where vegetation is sparse, often where serpentine deposits are located, it creates a suitable habitat for rare serpentine endemic species. The only special-status species in this area is the Marin dwarf flax (*Hesperolinon congestum*), which is state and federally listed as a threatened species. While no plants have been detected in the road or in the footprint where work is proposed, they are located in several locations along the road edge. Tiburon buckwheat (*Eriogonum luteolum* var. *caninum*), a species recognized by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as rare 1B.2 "Rare, threatened, or endangered" plant, is also located on the hillslope where there are exposed serpentine deposits. Other special status plant species found in the vicinity of the project area include Tiburon mariposa lily (*Calochortus tiburonensis*), serpentine reed grass (*Calamagrostis ophitidis*), pitted onion (*Allium lacunosum*), and Marsh triteleia (*Triteleia peduncularis*). These populations would be marked for avoidance. No special-status species have been identified on the downslope side of the road along the berm removal zone within 25 feet of Reed Ranch Fire Road. The project area does not contain any wetlands, Waters of the State, or Waters of the United States.

An 8-inch diameter water line serving the local community is buried under the inboard side of Reed Ranch Fire Road, which would be avoided during project implementation.

¹ A MCOSD Fire Road is defined as an unpaved road located on Open Space District lands that provides access for maintenance and emergency vehicles, while also providing for passive multi-use recreational opportunities for public use and enjoyment.

Project Description: The proposed project would install a French drain, implement road out-sloping, berm removal, rolling dips, and rock overlay armoring to address existing drainage issues. The proposed project would also close three existing social trails.² These treatments are described below. Implementation of the proposed project is planned to begin in September 2026 and would take approximately one month to complete using MCOSD trail crew. Equipment will primarily enter onto the fire road at the Reed Ranch Fire Road entrance, a continuation of the residential Reed Ranch Road in Tiburon, but may also use Ring Mountain Fire Road. Material will be staged in two locations. The first staging location will be on the north end of Reed Ranch Road intersection with Ring Mountain Fire Road, and materials will be confined to the road prism of Ring Mountain Fire Road. The second location will be on the south side of Reed Ranch Road at the widest and most disturbed section of the road and just off the road edge (approximately a 20 by 20 foot area). Once materials from the second staging location have been removed, scrapped vegetation (removed from the road prism during this repair) will be used to cover and rehabilitate the area where materials were stored, and. The equipment required to implement the proposed project would include excavator, dozer, compactor, dumptruck, front loader, water tender. No regulatory permit authorizations would be required to implement the proposed project.

French drain: The French drain would intercept runoff as it drains into the road corridor and would convey runoff to an outflow onto the hillslope below. Currently, an 80-foot-long gully is present at the proposed French drain location formed by hillslope runoff accumulating and flowing unimpeded down Reed Ranch Fire Road. Construction of the French drain would entail the excavation of a 2.5-foot-wide, 2.5-foot-deep, and 140-foot-long trench down the road, installation of an 8-inch perforated pipe, and drain rock backfill. Future excavation may be unnecessary in areas where the pre-existing gully meets the placement and depth criteria.

Road Out-sloping, Berm Removal and Rolling Dips: Approximately 500 feet of Reed Ranch Fire Road would be out-sloped and the low berm would be removed. The material removed from the berm would be reincorporated into the road surface for out-sloping. These treatments would allow surface runoff to drain across and out of the road corridor rather than down it. The out-sloping and berm removal work would require some excavation with variable depth and width. The width of the regrading is not expected to exceed 10 feet, and temporary impact to adjacent vegetation would not exceed 15 feet.

In addition to road out-sloping and berm removal, eight grade-reversing rolling dips would be installed in this section. Grade-reversing rolling dips are road drainage features that prevent runoff from draining longitudinally down Reed Ranch Fire Road and would complement the road out-sloping and berm removal treatments and effectively limit the amount of road surface area that can drain to a given location. Grade reversing rolling dips are a standard Best Management Practice (BMP) identified in the MCOSD's Road and Trail Management Plan (RTMP) to improve drainage and sustainability. Installation of the rolling dips would require localized recontouring of the soil and minimal excavation of the outward edge of Reed Ranch Fire Road to create an outflow path for runoff. These drainage "spouts" would be positioned at an angle to Reed Ranch Fire Road and each would be approximately 10 feet by 10 feet. Excavation depth would vary depending on the terrain's steepness in each specific location. Organic material and topsoil within the area of disturbance for each dip location would be scraped and stockpiled for later use. Once this material has been removed, mineral soil would be excavated, shaped, and compacted to form the rolling dips. The stockpiled topsoil and organics would then be redistributed over the dip-outfall areas at the interface of the road prism and native ground. The location of the rolling dips would be flagged in the field by the MCOSD Senior Natural Resources Planner, who would provide professional oversight for their implementation. The MCOSD biologist would work with Operations staff and the Senior Resources Planner to ensure project implementation would have the least impact on the surrounding native plant communities possible.

Closure of Social Trails: In addition to repairing Reed Ranch Fire Road, the proposed project would close three social trails to encourage visitors to remain on Reed Ranch Fire Road with the purpose of protecting sensitive areas, consistent with Policies and Best Management Practices included in the MCOSD's Road and Trail Management Plan. The methods for closure for each trail would be based on the proximity of sensitive resources. The least invasive closure method would be implemented whenever possible. In areas where soil disturbance is undesired, closure methods would include seeding and/or disguising the closure area with natural materials such as grass thatch, which would be collected from other areas within Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve. In less sensitive areas, closure methods would include pin flags, allowing vegetation to grow over trampled areas. Planting with native species may be used to rehabilitate social trails. Split rail fencing at the edge of the Reed Ranch Fire Road improvements would be used to permanently close access to these social trails. Closure of the social trails would include temporary or permanent signage posted near or on the split-rail fencing to indicate "Area Closed for Restoration." Closure methods and passive restoration would restore approximately 2,000 square feet of sensitive serpentine grassland habitat.

² A MCOSD social trail is defined as a trail created by visitors that has not been adopted as part of the system trail network identified through the RTMP Region 6 Conditional Trail Designation process.

Parks staff would monitor closed social trails for recovery and visitor compliance in perpetuity and adaptively manage as needed. Monitoring would be weekly as visitor circulation patterns adapt to the closures of the social trails, with reduced frequency over time to a monthly schedule. Social trail closure photo monitoring would be used for several years after the initial closure, and then as needed. Rangers would utilize education and enforcement citations during their patrols. Adaptive management measures for social trail closure would include the same methods described above to close trails such as seeding, fencing, signage, and pin flags as well as increased monitoring or patrolling by MCOSD Rangers, extending the length of the fencing, and planting. Success of the social trail closures would be evaluated by visually observing a decrease in visitors using the closed trails, a decrease in bare ground, and an increase in plant growth.

Road Armoring: Reed Ranch Fire Road would be armored with a rock overlay to stabilize the road tread, create a more durable surface, and aid the drainage treatments which would provide improved wet-weather access to hikers and cyclists and prevent the re-opening of the social trail on the hillslopes. In areas where increased trail drainage and definition are needed, such as at the northernmost section, armoring would extend the width of the fire road to approximately 10 to 12 feet. Progressing south, the armoring width would reduce to approximately 5 feet. The narrow width would accommodate recreational access during the wet months and, in the dry months, still allow for emergency and maintenance vehicle access. The size of rock used on the overlay would vary, increasing to a small cobble size, approximately 6 inches in diameter, in the muddiest of locations to smaller drain-rock where conditions are drier or well-drained. A geotextile would be placed under the armoring to improve the performance and longevity of the armoring in the clay soils present onsite. Prior to application, vegetation that would obstruct armoring will be scraped and stockpiled at the south staging location. When the road repair is complete, the stockpiled vegetation will be spread across the staging area to restore a more natural appearance and introduce organic matter, accelerating the rehabilitation of vegetation where materials have been stored off of the road. All rock materials would be imported from weed-free sources, and no salvaging or repositioning of native rocks would occur. Approximately 370 cubic yards of rock (1.5-inch minus base rock) would be required for road armoring.

Protection Measures for Sensitive Resources: Applicable Policies and Best Management Practices (BMPs) included in the MCOSD's RTMP would be implemented, including dry season construction, implementation of erosion control and water pollution prevention measures, requiring imported materials be supplied from a dependable seed-free and organic-matter vendor, and avoidance/minimization measures associated with special status species. Spring surveys would be conducted before project implementation to confirm plant locations and flag any rare plant populations for avoidance. Previous and future surveys would search the roadbed and 25 feet on both sides. Dry season project implementation after flowering season would further prevent impacts on any plants, and saving topsoil to re-dress any areas of implementation would also help preserve any seeds or bulbs that could be found in the soil. Additional measures would include retrieving and relocating any native bulbs that may be unearthed during construction, and saving native topsoil to redress the area of disturbance. Post-project implementation, the MCOSD would monitor the project area for vegetation regrowth, introduction of invasive plants, and translocation of invasive plants. Successful establishment of vegetation in this area would be closely monitored, along with any additional erosion control such as landscape coir or wattles if needed.

Consistent with the MCOSD's RTMP Policies and BMPs, all culturally sensitive areas would be avoided and monitored during project implementation. All onsite personnel would be trained in cultural resources sensitivity and awareness to ensure that discovery protocols and notifications are in compliance with the draft Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve Cultural Resources Management Plan, September 2024 and the Cultural Resources Awareness and Guidelines prepared by Far Western in 2025 in conjunction with a MCOSD staff Cultural Awareness Training. Ground-disturbing activities would be monitored by an archaeologist and a tribal monitor as determined necessary by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR). Should a cultural resource or human remains be discovered during project implementation, project-related activities within 50 feet of the discovery would cease, MCOSD would directly notify the FIGR, and MCOSD would implement recommendations from the FIGR regarding the discovery.

Public Agency Approving Project: Marin County Parks and Open Space District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project: Chris Chamberlain, Director and General Manager

Reasons for Exemption: The MCOSD has reviewed the project along with its environmental setting and has determined it to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under the following sections of the California Administrative Code:

Section 15301: Existing Facilities: The proposed project consists of the MCOSD improving drainage at an existing public facility to lessen environmental impacts caused by erosion and sedimentation. The project area is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 or within a state scenic highway. Implementation of the proposed project would not affect scenic resources, historical buildings, rock outcroppings, or result in a significant effect to the environment due to unusual circumstances. The MCOSD has been working with the FIGR and an archaeological consultant on a Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Ring Mountain

Open Space Preserve. To date, the known cultural and tribal cultural resources have been identified and mapped. There are no known cultural resources present in, or immediately adjacent to the project area.

On-going vegetation management in and next to the project area has included invasive plant management and rare plant monitoring and management. Invasive plant management has included manual, mechanical, or chemical removal of invasive plant species which threaten the biodiversity within Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve. Rare plant monitoring and management has included mapping, data collection, installation of barriers such as fences, research, and re-introduction of rare species. These activities would continue into the future. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

The proposed project is an environmentally beneficial project. Marin dwarf flax (*Hesperolinon congestum*), which is state and federally listed as a threatened species, can be found on the margins of the upper portion of the road, approximately 15 feet from the outflow of the proposed French drain. Preventing future sedimentation on the adjacent hillslope would benefit this and other locally-sensitive plants found in the project vicinity, as visitors are currently trampling them to avoid the wet road conditions caused by the lack of road drainage. Closure of the social trails and passive restoration would restore approximately 2,000 square feet of sensitive serpentine grassland habitat.

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