SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-E**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date : May 6, 2010

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/ACTION RE UNNEEDED DISTRICT LANDS

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive a presentation on the progress of the Land Management Committee and Other Activities regarding Unneeded District Lands and provide direction to the Committee and General Manager.

FISCAL IMPACT: No direct impact.

DISCUSSION:

At the April meeting the General Manager gave a presentation on the progress made in moving forward with an Unneeded District Lands Strategy. At the meeting the Board agreed with the following general strategy:

Purpose: The District will divest itself of unneeded property with the purposes of

- Proper management of lands,
- Maintaining community values of river access and open space,
- Reducing District liability,
- Reducing staff time dealing with property issues,
- Producing income which is a goal but not a requirement.

1. Explore river access and trail possibilities with local Recreation and Park Districts
2. Keep revenue producing parcels (Mount Jackson tower sites)
3. For larger, back country parcels, follow up with open space agencies, if R&P Districts are not interested.
4. Engage broker to market remainder of unneeded properties.

Since the April Board meeting, the Lands Management Committee has met, a field trip was taken to the Monte Rio properties and staff have discovered the existence of State legislation, the Surplus Lands Act, which directs the District to take certain steps in disposing of surplus property.

Surplus Lands Act. The Surplus Lands Act requires the District to make surplus lands available to public agencies prior to disposing of the lands to private parties. Coincidentally, that's generally the strategy approved at the April meeting. Differences include direction on what public agencies need to be contacted – the list includes the Sonoma County Housing Authority, local school district, and County

Parks, and the State Resources Agency, and these agencies have 60 days to respond. Letters have been sent to these agencies in the past two weeks.

Monte Rio Recreation and Parks District Meeting. On April 4, the District's Unneeded Lands Strategy was presented at the Monte Rio Recreation and Parks Meeting. They are interested. The District's Master Plan includes plans for regional trails and they have interest in the river access parcel which is outside their current boundary. Parcel acquisition will likely need to wait until the boundary expansion effort is completed.

Land Management Committee. The Land Management Committee met on April 9 to discuss how to move forward. The general agreement of the group was to put together a Board workshop: advertise in advance in local papers; solicit ideas, hold the workshop, select best approach(es). The point of workshop would not be to get details, but rather to get best groups working on this.

Field Trip to Monte Rio Parcels. On April 15 members of the Land Management Committee took a filed trip to the larger parcels above the Monte Rio Terraces. We drove to the Villa Grande Tank site and walked into District parcels on existing trails from there. The existing trails are wide, fairly easy to traverse (not overgrown with brush), but steep in places. We ran into other trail walkers who confirmed that the trails connect up with trails from the Sonoma Coast State Park (Figure 1).

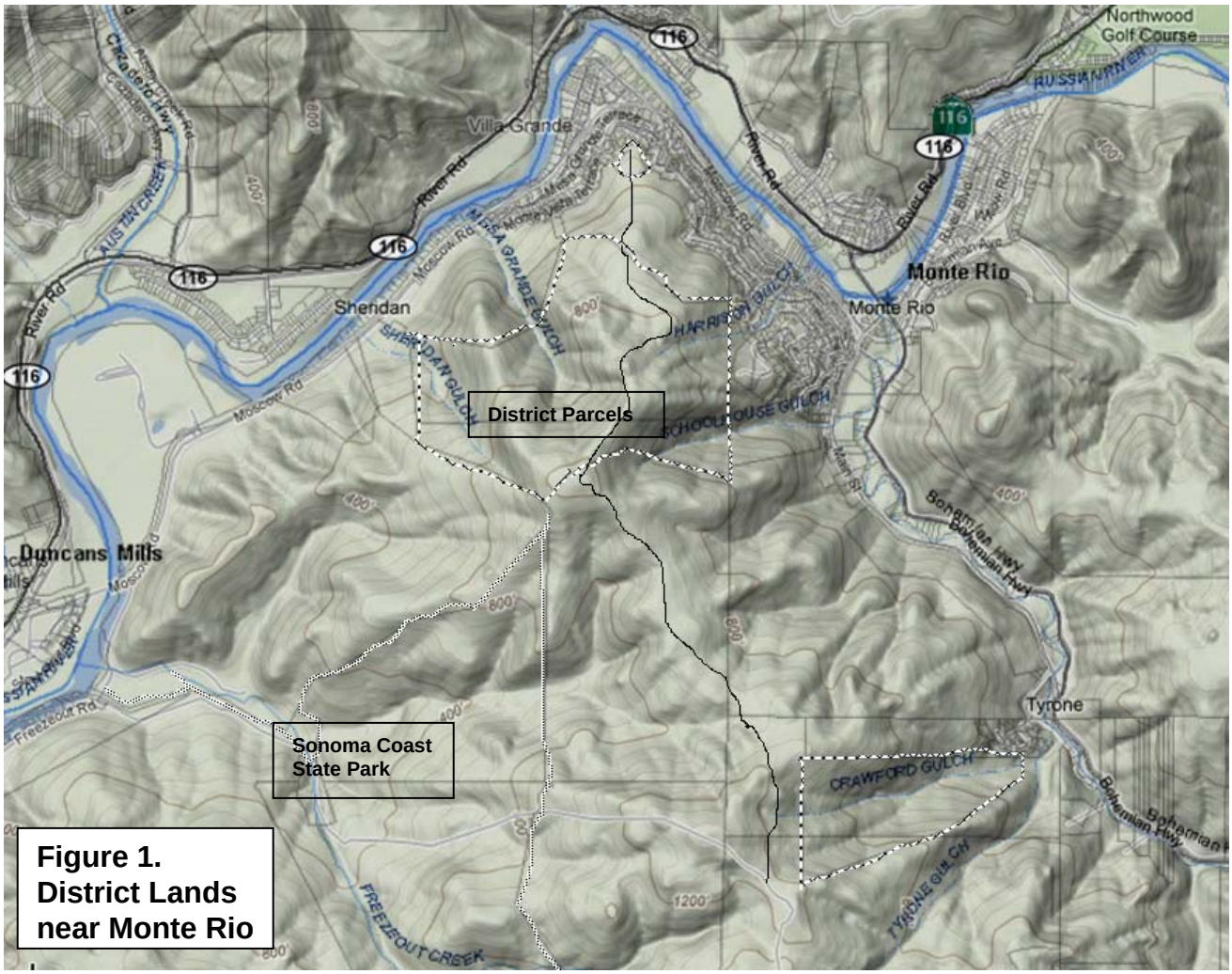

Figure 1. District Lands near Monte Rio