SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

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

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date: November 3, 2011

Subject: PRESENTATION ON WONDERLAND TRAIL PROJECT

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive a presentation by Monte Rio Recreation and Park District on the progress on the Wonderland Trail Project and Sweetwater Springs Water District part in that project, focusing on transfer options for the use of current Sweetwater Springs Water District parcels in this project.

FISCAL IMPACT: none

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Steve Baxman, President of the MRR&PD, and other representatives of the MRR&PD will give an update on the progress of the Russian River Watershed Adventure Park and Wonderland Trail (Wonderland Trail). The MRR&P representatives wish to discuss land transfer/tenure options for the use of Sweetwater Springs Water District parcels in this Project. Please see the attachments for more information on the Project and background for their presentation.

Monte Rio Recreation & Park District
P.O. Box 877 Monte Rio CA 95462
Phone 707-865-2487 Fax 707-865-0229

Russian River Watershed Adventure Park
& Wonderland Trail
9725 Main Street
Monte Rio, CA 95462 October 26, 2011

Setting and Site Description

The subject property is located at 9725 Main Street. The parcel has 600' of frontage on Main Street and 650' frontage on Dutch Bill Creek with an overall land area of approximately 3.8 acres. The property slopes down gently from Main Street to Dutch Bill Creek.

The site is the location of the former Monte Rio Elementary School. In 1998 the property was transferred to the Monte Rio Recreation and Park District (MRRPD) from the Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOSD).

Project Details
In April 2011, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approved $1,356,890 for Phase I improvements to the property and structure.

Phase I
Improvements include a new skate park, community garden, public trail, permeable public parking area with 1 ADA compliant van accessible stall and 12 standard stalls, public restrooms with a total of 3 toilets, 1 urinal, 4 lavatories, 200 sf concession and 1200 sf outdoor dining patio.

The building facilities including the restrooms, concession patio and skate park are to be managed by a concessionaire who will rent the concession from the MRRPD. The patio associated with the concession will front Main Street immediately to the west of the existing gymnasium building. The concessionaire will offer light faire such as sandwiches, soups and salads as well as waters, coffee, tea and soft drinks.
It is the intent of the MRRPD that the tabled patio be the nexus of the project in the first phase providing a way station on a busy bicycling route as well as serving the users of the skating, gardening and trail facilities.

Phase I improvements will also include a new on-site septic system. The system is likely to be a Class I bottomless sand filter and will replace an existing standard system located well below the 10-year flood plain and within the 100' set back to summer time flow. The proposed new system

will be located in excess of 200' from summer time flows and will be entirely above the 10-year flood plain.

In July 2011, the MRRPD submitted a grant application to California State Parks for $4,932,696.00 under Proposition 84 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Round Two. It is anticipated that funded projects will be determined by Spring 2012. This requested funding is intended to implement Phase II.

Phase II

Site improvements include expanded parking area, School House Creek restoration, trail connections to off-site trail system to Willow creek State Park. The District intends to provide accommodations for a weekly Farmers Market in the entry court between the exhibit hall (housed in the existing gymnasium) and the community garden. Phase II building improvements include elevation of all habitable areas above the base flood elevation, 2,400 sf watershed presentation room, 2,400 sf watershed exhibit hall, 500 sf exhibit orientation area, 250 sf trailhead center/gift shop, 600 sf administration office, 150 sf exhibit storage area, restrooms with a total of 4 toilets, 1 urinal and 5 lavatories.

The trail connections to the off-site trail system located on the existing Willow Creek State Park will be through three adjoining properties. The properties are currently owned by Sweetwater Springs Water District and comprise a total land area of approximately 316 acres. These properties are generally steep in grade and largely tree covered. The property immediately across Main Street from the subject property is APN 096-010-001 and has a land area of approximately 23.75 acres. The MRRPD intends to acquire an easement through this parcel as an access to the overall trail system. The proposed trail improvements through this property will be located so as to maintain the maximum distance from the tanks and water system improvements as is feasible based on general topography, vegetation and creek alignments. The MRRPD understands SSWD is intending to maintain ownership of the tank property as recent capital improvements have been completed as components of the water storage and delivery system.

Based on preliminary plot history research, the MRRPD believes that access from Main Street to the tank site will be accommodated by an existing public way and will be part of the School House Creek restoration project in Phase II.

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The trail route is intended to climb through the tank property described above so as to provide access to two larger parcels immediately to the west of the tank property. The MRRPD intends to purchase or lease the two parcels; 097-130-010 (236 acres) and 097-130-011 (56 acres) which are contiguous and are near the summit of Starrett Hill a vertical distance of approximately 600 feet. An existing fire road known as the Monte Rio Fuel Break traverses the properties ascending from the SSWD Mesa Grande storage tank site. The northern terminus of the road is the Mesa Grande tank and the road proceeds through the SSWD parcels onto Mendocino Redwood Company property and ultimately onto Willow Creek State Park property. The MRRPD intends to improve the fire road as one route of connection to the Willow Creek State Park lands. In addition to the existing fire road, the MRRPD intends to install approximately 2 miles of trail from the Adventure Park through the tank site onto the larger hilltop parcels. The trails will have associated way stations including benches, picnic tables and open areas providing access to overlook corridors and view sheds to the floor of the Dutch Bill Creek watershed below.

The trail design is intended to provide for multi-use opportunities including hiking, biking and possibly equestrian users (should trail slopes support the use and trailer parking is available). The trail system will be open from dawn to dusk everyday and the MRRPD (or concessionaire) will maintain all trail improvements and provide liability coverage for the users.

The MRRPD envisions this new park opportunity as a recreational feature serving local as well as regional users. The District is investigating a number of operational models for long term operations and maintenance. Included in the consideration are private concessionaires, non-profits and county partnerships.

Wonderland Trail Project Land Transfer Options

Monte Rio Recreation & Park District

Draft

- **Option A:**

  Sweetwater Springs leases properties to MRRPD

Proposed physical improvements completed with Prop 84 funding (if approved)

MRRPD provides entitlements including CEQA compliance	$50,000.00
MRRPD provides non-industrial forest management plan(FMP)	$75,000.00
MRRPD completes creek/habitat restoration (on SSWD tank site)	$340,000.00
MRRPD installs trails as access to properties	$250,000.00
Estimated value	$715,000.00

- Long-term Outcome

  MRRPD agrees to long-term lease from SSWD (30 year minimum)
  MRRPD assumes general liability of property
  MRRPD provides management/oversight of public access
  MRRPD & SSWD share revenues from FMP
  SSWD maintains ownership and water rights

Note:

The application as submitted to California State Offices of Grants and Local Services includes the above listed fees/physical improvements. To date the MRRPD and SSWD have included letters of intention to work together should grant funding be made available.

- **Option B:**

  Sweetwater Springs sells conservation easements to MRRPD

Proposed fees completed with Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District match grant funds (SCAPOSD)

MRRPD purchases conservation easement from SSWD	To be determined
MRRPD purchases conservation easement (tank property)	To be determined
Appraisal (details below)	$6,000.00
MRRPD completes surveys	$25,000.00

MRRPD completes title reports	$4,500.00
MRRPD establishes Escrow (title insurance & escrow fees)	$1,500.00
Estimated value	$37,000.00 + TBD

•Long-term Outcome

SSWD maintains conservation easements on all three properties with limited rights
MRRPD assumes general liability for public access portion of properties
SCAPOSD oversees conservation easements on all properties

The MRRPD has determined that the project as described in the project narrative is eligible for application to the SCAPOSD match grant program. The program submission deadline is likely to be the middle of January 2012. It is currently estimated that approximately $2,500,000 will be available for projects county-wide. The funds as approved by Redevelopment for improvements at Creekside Park will act as the match.

•On-going discussion in effort to establish valuation of conservation easement on SSWD properties

As part of the application materials to submit for SCAPOSD funds an estimated or agreed upon valuation of the conservation easements to be acquired must be established. The estimate for a full appraisal is $6,000. A restricted appraisal is estimated at $3,500 and is a barebones document created only for budgeting purposes. Alternatively the estimate for an oral appraisal is $2,500. Please note, appraisal costs can be reimbursed as part of the SCAPOSD grant.

If there is to be an application to SCAPOSD for match grant funds and the Districts cannot agree on a budget level value of the easements, an appraisal will need to be completed.

•Option C:

Sweetwater Springs sells properties to MRRPD in fee simple

Proposed fees completed with Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District match grant funds (SCAPOSD)

MRRPD purchases properties from SSWD	To be determined
MRRPD purchases conservation easement (tank property)	To be determined
Appraisal (details below)	$6,000.00

MRRPD completes surveys	$25,000.00
MRRPD completes title reports	$4,500.00
MRRPD establishes Escrow (title insurance & escrow fees)	$1,500.00
Estimated value	$37,000.00 + TBD

•Long-term Outcome

MRRPD assumes ownership and all rights of properties
SSWD maintains conservation easement on tank site
MRRPD assumes general liability for public access portion of tank site
SCAPOSD oversees conservation easements on all properties

The MRRPD has determined that the project as described in the project narrative is eligible for application to the SCAPOSD match grant program. The program submission deadline is likely to be the middle of January 2012. It is currently estimated that approximately $2,500,000 will be available for projects county-wide. The funds as approved by Redevelopment for improvements at Creekside Park will act as the match.

•On-going discussion in effort to establish valuation of SSWD properties

As part of the application materials to submit for SCAPOSD funds an estimated or agreed upon valuation of the properties to be acquired must be established. The estimate for a full appraisal is $6,000. A restricted appraisal is estimated at $3,500 and is a barebones document created only for budgeting purposes. Alternatively the estimate for an oral appraisal is $2,500. Please note, appraisal costs can be reimbursed as part of the SCAPOSD grant.

If there is to be an application to SCAPOSD for match grant funds and the Districts cannot agree on a budget level value, an appraisal will need to be completed.