



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 2/19/2020

Agenda Placement: 7A

Napa County Planning Commission Board Agenda Letter

TO: Napa County Planning Commission

FROM: Charlene Gallina for David Morrison - Director
Planning, Building and Environmental Services

REPORT BY: Trevor Hawkes, Planner III - 707-253-4388

SUBJECT: Suscol Headwaters Park and Napa Solano Ridge Trail

RECOMMENDATION

NAPA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT / SUSCOL HEADWATERS PARK & NAPA SOLANO RIDGE TRAIL / USE PERMIT # P19-00482-UP AND USE PERMIT MINOR MODIFICATION # P19-00483-MM

CEQA Status: Napa County is a responsible agency for this project. As the decision-making body for the County on the project, the Planning Commission certifies that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted by the Board of the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District and finds that it adequately addresses those effects that are within the scope of the County's jurisdiction as a responsible agency (CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15050 (b)). The project site is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Sec. 65962.5

Request: This request consists of a new Use Permit to allow the construction and operation of Suscol Headwaters Park, a public recreational facility including trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. The project is located on 4 parcels totaling 709 acres, approximately 2.87 miles east of the intersection of Highway 29 and Highway 221 and within the AW (Agricultural Watershed) & AW:AC (Agricultural Watershed/Airport Compatibility Combination) zoning district. Assessor's Parcel Nos. 045-360-013, 045-360-014, 045-360-022, and 057-030-014. The request also consists of a Use Permit Minor Modification to P04-0464, for the Napa Solano Ridge Trail, which would provide for a through-connection to Suscol Headwaters Park by correcting the route of the trail. The Napa Solano Ridge Trail is located on 2 parcels totaling 244.75 acres, adjoining the parcels of Suscol Headwaters Park to the north and within the AW (Agricultural Watershed) & AW:SWP (Agricultural Watershed/Skyline Wilderness Park Combination) zoning district. Assessor's Parcel Nos. 045-360-001 and 045-370-001.

Staff Recommendation: Certify that the Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration, and approve the requested use permit as conditioned, and approve the requested use permit minor modification as conditioned.

Staff Contact: Trevor Hawkes, Planner III, (707) 253-4388 or trevor.hawkes@countyofnapa.org

Applicant: Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District

Applicant Representative: Chris Cahill, Principal Planner; (707) 299-1335 or ccahill@ncrposd.org and Kyra Purvis, Park and Open Space Planner; (707) 299-1788 or kpurvis@ncrposd.org.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed Actions:

That the Planning Commission:

1. Certifies that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District;
2. Finds that the Mitigated Negative Declaration adequately addresses those effects that are within the scope of the County's jurisdiction as a responsible agency.
3. Approves Use Permit No. P19-00482-UP based on findings 1-12 of Attachment A and subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Attachment B); and
4. Approves Use Permit Minor Modification No. P19-00483 based on findings 1-12 of Attachment C and subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Attachment D).

Discussion:

The requested use permit would allow the creation, development, and operation of the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District's (NCRPOSD) Suscol Headwaters Park on property located 2.87 miles east of the intersection of Highway 29 and Highway 221. The proposed park would allow public access to and nature-based recreation on 709 acres of open space in the Suscol Creek, Sheehy Creek, and Fagan Creek watersheds. Proposed uses include hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and nature observation and study. Access to the park would be by foot, bicycle or horseback through Skyline Wilderness Park and the Napa Solano Ridge Trail easement across the Tuteur Ranch parcel, with the existing Napa Solano Ridge Trail being extended into the proposed park. Structural development as proposed is limited to a kiosk and map installed at the Park entrance from Skyline Wilderness Park and directional signage identifying trailheads, trail junctions, and park boundaries. The district will also be constructing a pond for red-legged frog habitat as part of a mitigation agreement with Caltrans and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The park's trail system will total approximately 7.31 miles at buildout.

The requested use permit minor modification would allow for realignment of the Napa Solano Ridge Trail, a 1.4 mile multi-use loop trail commencing at the end of an existing trail within Skyline Wilderness Park and traveling east along onto the Tuteur Family Trust property. Realignment of the Napa Solano Ridge Trail will allow for a public through connection from the aforementioned properties to the entrance of Suscol Headwaters Park.

Staff believes all required findings can be made in support of this park and its recreational land use and recommends approval of the proposed Use Permit and Use Permit Minor Modification.

FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

County Strategic Plan pillar addressed:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Napa County is a responsible agency for this project. As the decision-making body for the County on the project, the Planning Commission's role is to certify that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted by the Board of the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District and find that it adequately addresses those effects that are within the scope of the County's jurisdiction as a responsible agency (CEQA Guidelines Section 15050 (b)).

The NCRPOSD is acting as lead agency for the Suscol Headwaters Park and Napa Solano Ridge Trail projects. This is consistent with the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15051(a), "if the project is carried out by a public agency, then that agency shall be the lead agency" even though the project may be located in another agency's jurisdiction. The Board of the NCRPOSD adopted the project Mitigated Negative Declaration at their January 13, 2020, meeting. That having been done, the Planning Commission's responsibility here is to: 1.) review and consider the adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration (it is attached as Attachment F) and 2.) find that it adequately addresses the use permit and use permit minor modification requests which are presently before the Commission. Having reviewed the adopted document, Planning Staff has confidence in its adequacy and in its relevance to the requested use permit and use permit minor modification.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Owners: Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District; 1195 Third Street, 2nd Floor; Napa, CA 94559

Applicant: Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District; 1195 Third Street, 2nd Floor; Napa, CA 94559

Representative: Chris Cahill, Principal Planner; 1195 Third Street, 2nd Floor; Napa, CA 94559; (707) 299-1335; ccahill@ncrposd.org. Kyra Purvis, Park and Open Space Planner; 1195 Third Street, 2nd Floor; Napa, CA 94559; (707) 299-1788; kpurvis@ncrposd.org.

Zoning for Suscol Headwaters Park: Primarily AW (Agricultural Watershed) with a small portion of the AC overlay
Zoning for Napa Solano Ridge Trail: AW (Agricultural Watershed) and AW:SWP (Agricultural Watershed: Skyline Wilderness Park Combination)

GP Designation: AWOS (Agriculture, Watershed, and Open Space)

Filed: December 12, 2019; **Deemed Complete:** January 13, 2020

Parcel Size: Suscol Headwaters Park: APN 045-360-022 (299.02 acres), APN 045-360-013 (91.21 acres), APN 045-360-014 (0.14 acres), and APN 057-030-014 (343.83 acres); combined 709 acres. Napa Solano Ridge Trail: APN 045-370-001 (106.75 acres), and APN 045-360-001 (138 acres); combined 244.75 acres

Existing Development: No existing structural development occurs within Suscol Headwaters Park. The Napa Solano Ridge Trail includes two existing bridges which cross Marie Creek, but no other existing structural development.

Days and Hours of Operation: 7 days a week; 7am - 5pm

Parking: No new parking spaces are being proposed for Suscol Headwaters Park. Public access to the park will be achieved through Skyline Wilderness Park, which has sufficient parking supply to meet the demand of Suscol

Headwaters Park. No new parking is being proposed for the Napa Solano Ridge Trail realignment.

Adjacent General Plan Designation/ Zoning / Land Use:

Suscol Headwaters Park

North: AWOS / AW & AW:SWP / Park & Rural Recreation Facility (Skyline Wilderness Park & the Tuteur Family Trust property)

South: AWOS / AW & AW:AC / Agricultural and open space properties

East: AWOS / AW / Agricultural and open space properties

West: AWOS / AW & AW:AC / Agricultural and open space properties

Napa Solano Ridge Trail

North: AWOS / AW & AW:SWP / Park & Rural Recreation Facility

South: AWOS / AW / Proposed Suscol Headwaters Park

East: AWOS / AW / Agricultural and open space properties

West: AWOS / AW / Agricultural and open space properties

Code Compliance History:

None. There are no open or pending code violations for the four parcels. The County is not aware of any compliance issues on the property and no complaints have been filed.

Discussion Points:

Setting - The Suscol Headwaters Park project involves the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District improving and providing public access to and nature-based recreation on 709 acres of publicly-owned ridgeline open space spread across the Suscol Creek, Sheehy Creek, and Fagan Creek watersheds adjacent to Skyline Wilderness Park and due north of Jameson Canyon Road. Suscol Headwaters is mostly undeveloped and currently includes a network of dirt ranch roads traversing the property. It has historically been used for cattle grazing, which continues to take place on the property under a lease with NCRPOSD. The property contains a variety of mostly non-native grasslands, mixed Oak Woodlands, and riparian vegetation.

The land east and north of Suscol Headwaters is divided into four primarily undeveloped parcels, much of which are used for cattle grazing. There are four adjacent properties to the west and south that are developed with vineyard, and one permitted for vineyard but not yet developed. To the southwest, but not immediately adjacent to Suscol Headwaters are the Napa Sanitation District spray fields.

Public access to the park would be via the Skyline Wilderness Park and the Napa Solano Ridge Trail easement across the Tuteur Ranch, with the existing Napa Solano Ridge Trail being extended into the proposed park. Visitors will access Suscol Headwaters through either the main Skyline Wilderness Park entrance off Imola Avenue, or the River to Ridge entrance off the Napa Vallejo Highway. There is no new access proposed at this time. The project includes a minor modification to Napa County Use Permit P04-0464-UP (Napa Solano Ridge Trail) to correct the route, provide a public through-connection to the Suscol Headwaters Park from the existing trail, and update the conditions of approval.

Proposed Uses -

Hiking. Allowed except when the park is closed due to high fire hazard, excessively wet trails, or other hazards (see discussion in "Other Notable Features" section regarding park closure policy).

Mountain biking. Allowed on all named trails, except when park is closed due to high fire hazard, excessively wet trails, or other hazards (see discussion in "Other Notable Features" section regarding park closure policy).

Horseback riding. Same as for mountain biking.

Nature observation and study. Allowed year-round, except when necessary to restrict use due to high fire hazard, excessively wet trails, or other hazards (see discussion in "Other Notable Features" section regarding park closure policy).

No Motorized Recreation. Except as required or recommended by state and federal disability access laws and regulations, no motorized recreation will be permitted, and the public will not be permitted to drive any form of motorized vehicle within the preserve.

Other low-impact outdoor recreation and education. Open space-based activities that do not disturb the natural character of the area, such as non-invasive geocaching or picnicking, but not including public hunting (hunting and trapping for management purposes by the District and its agents would be allowed), target shooting, or barbequing, may be allowed.

Proposed Facilities -

A total of 7.31 miles of trails are included in Suscol Headwaters Park, +/- 6.25 of which are new trails.

Lookout Trail (0.19 mile). An existing single-track trail that connects a lookout point in the northern portion of the property to the existing portion of the Suscol Ridge Trail, which in turn connects to the NCRPOSD's Napa-Solano Ridge Trail, a dedicated easement over the Tuteur Family property that goes on to connect to Skyline Wilderness Park.

Suscol Ridge Trail (1.70 miles). A new single-track trail that sweeps from higher elevations in the northeastern portion of the property down through grassland to meet the Perdida Trail. The Suscol Ridge Trail also includes a portion of existing single-track trail connecting Suscol Headwaters Park and the Napa Solano Ridge Trail.

Buckaroo Trail (0.88 mile). A new single-track trail that descends from the existing portion of the Suscol Ridge Trail, following a tributary to Suscol Creek. This trail joins an existing ranch road for approximately 0.25 mile, where it crosses the Suscol Creek tributary at an existing ranch road crossing (no new crossing would be constructed).

Chance the Cowboy Trail (1.16 miles). An existing unimproved ranch road that follows a north-south ridge on the northwestern portion of the property, plus an approximately 300-foot stretch of new single-track at the northern end of the ranch road and a 500-foot segment of new single-track at the southern end. This trail connects with the Buckaroo Trail to the north and the Big and Little Bend Trails to the south.

Big Bend Trail (1.17 miles). A new single-track trail that begins at the southern terminus of the Chance the Cowboy Trail and loops around a prominent topographic feature ("the Knob") in the western portion of the property.

Little Bend Trail (0.97 mile). A new single-track trail that follows a similar course to the Big Bend Trail, but at higher elevations around the Knob.

Zane Trail (0.64 mile). A new single-track trail that follows a similar descent to the Buckaroo Trail, on the eastern side of the basin above the creek. This trail connects to the Buckaroo Trail in the north and the Perdida Trail in the south.

Perdida Trail (0.60 mile). A new single-track trail connecting the Suscol Ridge and Zane Trails, creating a 2.09-mile loop through the central and eastern portions of the property.

Signage. A kiosk and map will be installed at the park entrance from Skyline Wilderness Park, welcoming visitors to Suscol Headwaters and advising them of rules and regulations. Directional signage will be included at

trailheads and junctions, and signs advising users of park boundaries.

Other Notable Features -

Low Impact. Every aspect of construction and operation of the park will be designed to be low impact in terms of resource and energy consumption and generation of pollutants. There will be no motorized recreation within the park.

California red-legged frog. NCRPOSD will be constructing a red-legged frog pond and improving the surrounding habitat as part of an existing funding and mitigation agreement with Caltrans and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The area immediately surrounding the pond will be fenced to exclude both humans and wild pigs and to allow tightly controlled flash cattle grazing.

Wildfire hazard. Park activities will be limited as appropriate, up to and including full park closure, as needed during periods of extreme wildfire hazard, as determined by the County Fire Marshall or additionally whenever in the NCRPOSD's judgment the combination of forecasted temperature, humidity, and wind suggest extreme wildfire hazard. No open fires will be allowed.

Wet weather. Trails will be closed as needed during and after rainstorms to prevent soil erosion and damage to trails. Appropriate closure protocols for hikers, mountain bicyclists, and equestrians will be adopted and enforced. The performance standard used to guide the closure protocols will be that there is no trail-related sediment flow either directly or indirectly into local creeks.

Other Hazards. Trails will be partially or fully closed, and the park may be completely closed to the public as needed to avoid conflict with NCRPOSD property maintenance activities, or as needed to avoid any other public safety hazard or to protect water quality or other natural resources.

Hunting and shooting. No sport hunting or target shooting will be allowed.

Grazing. Existing grazing will be allowed to continue. The duration and intensity of grazing will be guided by the existing Suscol Mountain grazing management plan, adopted as a component of the Suscol Mountain Vineyards ECP. A key grazing objective will be to use grazing to control the risk of wildfire and the spread of invasive weeds.

Fencing. The property is largely fenced along its perimeter and internal fencing was reviewed and approved as a component of the Suscol Mountain Vineyards Agricultural Erosion Control Plan (ECP, P09-00176). Any additional fencing will be the minimum necessary to provide for public safety and limit trespass onto neighboring agricultural properties or for resource protection.

Environmental Commitments and Best Management Practices - The project incorporates the following features to enhance environmental protections during construction and operation in order to ensure minimal impacts:

Air Quality Best Management Practices, during construction:

- All exposed surfaces (graded areas, staging areas, stockpiles, and unpaved roads) shall be covered or watered twice per day as needed to maintain sufficient soil moisture to control fugitive dust.
- All trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials shall be covered in accordance with Section 23114 of the California Vehicle Code during transit to and from the site.
- The adjacent public roads shall be swept daily with wet power vacuum street sweepers, if visible soil material is carried/tracked out onto roadways.
- Traffic on unpaved areas and roads shall be limited to 10 mph.
- Grading and earthmoving activities shall be suspended when winds exceed 25 mph.
- Idling times shall be minimized either by shutting equipment off when not in use or reducing the maximum idling time to 5 minutes, as required by the California airborne toxics control measure Title 13, Section 2485 of California

Code of Regulations (CCR). Signs clearly indicating this provision shall be installed at all access points.

- All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance in manufacturer's specifications. All equipment shall be checked by a certified mechanic and determined to be running in proper condition prior to operation.
- A sign with the telephone number and person to contact at the Lead Agency regarding dust complaints shall be visibly posted at the site. The contact person shall respond and take corrective action within 48 hours. The Air District's phone number shall also be visible to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

Biological Resources Protections:

- No construction or soil disturbance will take place within the banks of any blue line stream.
- Excavated materials along the entirety of the trail routes shall be distributed in a manner that does not create piles or berms of uncompacted disturbed soil that would encourage colonization by invasive plants.
- No sport hunting shall not be allowed. Hunting or trapping on the property would be limited to wildlife management activities by the District, its agents, and/or wildlife agencies having jurisdiction over the relevant resource.
- The presence of bears and mountain lions shall be regarded as natural and desirable, and depredation permits for problem animals shall only be sought as a last resort, and only if there is a clearly demonstrated and immediate need to protect public safety and where other methods of risk minimization, avoidance, and public education cannot be relied upon.
- In the event any mature trees (=6-inch dbh) must be removed for trail construction, replacement trees of the same species shall be replanted and tended until successfully established at the ratio of two replacement trees for every one lost. No tree removal for trail construction purposes shall be allowed in recorded Oak Woodland Conservation Areas.

Cultural Resources Protections:

- Should any archaeological, cultural, or paleontological artifacts be found during any soil disturbing construction activities, construction will cease until the District has had the location inspected by a qualified professional and has taken appropriate steps as recommended by the qualified professional to protect the resource.
- If human remains are encountered the Napa County Coroner shall be informed to determine if an investigation of the cause of death is required and/or if the remains are of Native American origin. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if such remains are of Native American origin the nearest tribal relatives as determined by the State Native American Heritage Commission will be contacted to obtain recommendations for treating or removal of such remains, including grave goods, with appropriate dignity.

Soil Protections:

- New trail construction shall follow the standards and best management practices adopted by NCRPOSD in its Moore Creek Trail Construction Standards, as amended.

Safety Features:

- Public motor vehicle use shall be prohibited, except as required or recommended by the Americans with Disabilities Act and related federal and state regulations.
- Power tools shall only be used by properly trained and equipped staff and volunteers.
- Smoking shall be prohibited.
- The park shall be closed to public use during periods of extreme wildfire hazard, as determined by the County Fire Marshall, as well as when in NCRPOSD's judgment the combination of temperature, humidity and wind create a potentially unsafe situation.
- The public shall not be permitted to have open fires.

Water Quality Protections:

- New trail construction shall follow the standards and best management practices adopted by the District in its Moore Creek Trail Construction Standards, as amended.

- NCRPOSD shall obtain a grading permit or a grading permit exemption and comply with the conditions of the County's Grading Permit or exemption for all trail construction.
- No grading shall take place within the banks of any blue line streams.
- Where trails cross seasonal drainages, the drainages shall be kept clear of loose dirt created by trail grading activities, and then armored with native rock as needed to prevent soil from washing downhill during periods of significant rainfall and eventually getting into Suscol Creek. • Trails will be closed as needed during and after rainstorms to prevent soil erosion and damage to trails. Appropriate closure protocols for hikers, mountain bicyclists, and equestrians will be adopted and enforced. The performance standard used to guide the closure protocols will be that there is no trail-related sediment flow either directly or indirectly into local creeks.

Decision Making Options:P19-00482-UP - Suscol Headwaters Park

As noted in the Executive Summary Section above, staff is recommending approval of Use Permit P19-00482-UP with conditions of approval as described in Option 1 below. Decision making options also include a no project alternative and a continuance option.

Option 1 - Applicant's Proposal (Staff Recommendation)

Disposition - This option would result in approval of a Use Permit (P19-00482-UP) for the proposed park and rural recreation facility. Staff recommends this option as the request is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, applicable General Plan policies, and other County regulations.

Action Required - Follow the proposed action listed in Executive Summary. If conditions of approval are to be amended, specify conditions to be amended at time motion is made. This option has been analyzed for its environmental impacts, which were found to be less than significant.

Option 2 - Deny Proposed Project

Disposition - In the event the Commission determines that the project does not, or cannot meet the required findings for the granting of the Use Permit, Commissioners should identify what aspect or aspects of the project are in conflict with the required findings. State Law requires the Commission to adopt findings, based on the General Plan and County Code, setting forth why the proposed Use Permit is not being approved. Based on the administrative record as of the issuance of this staff report, there does not appear to be any evidence supporting denial of the project.

Action Required - Commission would take tentative motion to deny the project and remand the matter to staff for preparation of required findings to return to the Commission on a specific date.

Option 3 - Continuance Option

The Commission may continue an item to a future hearing date at its own discretion.

P19-00483-MM - Napa Solano Ridge Trail

As noted in the Executive Summary Section above, staff is recommending approval of Use Permit Minor Modification P19-00483-MM with conditions of approval as described in Option 1 below. Decision making options also include a no project alternative and a continuance option.

Option 1 - Applicant's Proposal (Staff Recommendation)

Disposition - This option would result in approval of a Use Permit Minor Modification (P19-00483) for the proposed park and rural recreation facility. Staff recommends this option as the request is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, applicable General Plan policies, and other County regulations.

Action Required - Follow the proposed action listed in Executive Summary. If conditions of approval are to be amended, specify conditions to be amended at time motion is made. This option has been analyzed for its environmental impacts, which were found to be less than significant.

Option 2 - Deny Proposed Project

Disposition - In the event the Commission determines that the project does not, or cannot meet the required findings for the granting of the Use Permit Minor Modification, Commissioners should identify what aspect or aspects of the project are in conflict with the required findings. State Law requires the Commission to adopt findings, based on the General Plan and County Code, setting forth why the proposed Modification is not being approved. Based on the administrative record as of the issuance of this staff report, there does not appear to be any evidence supporting denial of the project.

Action Required - Commission would take tentative motion to deny the project and remand the matter to staff for preparation of required findings to return to the Commission on a specific date.

Option 3 - Continuance Option

The Commission may continue an item to a future hearing date at its own discretion.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Recommended Findings Suscol Headwaters Park
- B . Recommended Conditions of Approval and Final Agency Approval Memos SHP
- C . Recommended Findings Napa Solano Ridge Trail
- D . Recommended Conditions of Approval and Final Agency Approval Memos NSRT
- E . Previous Project Conditions Napa Solano Ridge Trail
- F . Mitigated Negative Declaration
- G . Use Permit & Minor Modification Application Packets
- H . Graphics

Napa County Planning Commission: Approve

Reviewed By: Charlene Gallina