



June 5, 2018

William Keene, General Manager
Sonoma County Ag + Open Space
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

RE: Helen Putnam Regional Park Extension Matching Grant

Dear Mr. Keene:

We enthusiastically support Earth Island Institute's Helen Putnam Regional Park Extension project. Sonoma County Regional Parks has been monitoring this property for nearly two decades and has provided comments on development proposals on multiple occasions. Our focus has been safeguarding natural resources and ensuring connections and compatibility with Helen Putnam Regional Park. We are very supportive of this proposed acquisition, the enhanced protection of Kelly Creek, and new trails for the community to experience and enjoy.

If this project is implemented, the most valued resources alongside Kelly Creek will finally become a part of Putnam Park. This project will preserve a symbolic icon of the surrounding dairy belt along this D Street gateway to Petaluma and improve the community's connections to their treasured regional park.

This project offers multiple benefits. California red legged frog habitat will be protected and enhanced. Additional convenient parking would be created reducing current and future impacts to the Windsor Drive neighborhoods. Trail access to Helen Putnam Regional Park and regional trails including the Bay Area Ridge Trail will be extended. The urban separator between city neighborhoods and agricultural open spaces will be further enhanced as well as the Scenic Corridor along D Street. The ranch center could support interpretive facilities and expanded environmental and agricultural education programming at the Regional Park.

Earth Island Institute's championing the Kelly Creek Protection Project is making this endeavor possible. We ask that you support this essential extension to Helen Putnam Regional Park.

Sincerely,

Bert Whitaker
Director

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