



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

FILING REQUESTED BY AND WHEN FILED, RETURN TO:

Marin County Parks and Open Space District
1600 Los Gamos Drive, Suite 275; San Rafael, CA 94903
www.parks.marincounty.gov/
(415) 473-6387

FILED

02/12/2026

SHELLY SCOTT
MARIN COUNTY CLERK
By A.Oxlaj Arevalo Deputy

Marin County Clerk
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 234
San Rafael, CA 94903

DATE: February 12, 2026 **21-2026-032**
PROJECT TITLE: **SORICH TRAIL IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE-IN-USE**
PROJECT LOCATION: Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Open Space Preserve, San Rafael, Marin County, CA
ASSESSORS' PARCEL(S): 177-240-20, 177-220-61, 177-240-03

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of the Project: The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) is proposing the Sorich Trail Improvement Project, the purpose of which is to improve the existing trail to MCOSD multi-use standards¹ and change the trail use from hiking and equestrian use only to multi-use, which would allow bike use to provide a multi-use connection between the Town of San Anselmo and the Sun Valley and Terra Linda neighborhoods of San Rafael.

Project Area Existing Conditions: The Sorich Trail is a mid-slope trail² extending from Cemetery Fire Road to Sorich Park, which is operated by the Town of San Anselmo, to the Mission Pass Bike Path. It is approximately 1,650 feet in length with an average gradient of 7 percent and an average width of 3 feet. The trailhead is located within Sorich Park, which is managed by the town of San Anselmo. Shortly beyond the trailhead, the trail crosses into the MCOSD's Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Divide Open Space Preserve. The upper end of Sorich Trail intersects with Cemetery Fire Road, which continues up to the crest of Terra Linda Ridge. The trail traverses the south side of Terra Linda Ridge through a eucalyptus forest above the town of San Anselmo. The trail intersects four water courses. The structures utilized to cross these streams include one armored fill, one wooden pedestrian bridge, and two corrugated metal pipes. Sorich Trail is currently designated for hiking and equestrian use. It is popular with hikers and dog walkers, but cyclists are prohibited.

Sorich Trail within Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Divide Open Space Preserve is delineated in MCOSD's Vegetation Management Zone map as a Highly Disturbed Zone System Zone. No rare plant species are known to have previously occurred within the study area. The project area includes two vegetation types, both of which are dominated by non- native species, including the *Avena* spp. - *Bromus* spp. Herbaceous Semi-Natural Alliance, which occupies approximately 15 percent of the project area and the *Eucalyptus (globulus, camaldulensis)* Semi-Natural Association, which occupies approximately 85 percent of the study area. No rare plant taxa were located during field surveys.³

The project area does not include critical habitat for any special-status wildlife species and while habitat in the project vicinity supports nesting habitat, no nests were identified during surveys.⁴

Project Description: The trail will be upgraded to multi-use standards to support the proposed change-in-use. Implementation of the proposed change-in-use would eliminate a gap to provide a multi-use connection between the Town of San Anselmo and the Sun Valley and Terra Linda neighborhoods of San Rafael. The proposed trail improvements would include widening the existing trail to a 4-foot width, improving tread condition by implementing trail drainage techniques and armoring the trail surface, and improving site lines by removing small diameter trees. The proposed project would replace an existing ditch-relief culvert, construct a vented causeway climbing turn to drain ditch relief culvert flows under the trail, and install a rock wall. These techniques and features are described below. Approximately 0.15 acres would be affected by project implementation.

¹ A MCOSD multi-use trail provides trail access for hiking, biking, and equestrian use.
² A mid-slope trail is a type of hiking or walking path that is located on the side of a slope, typically providing scenic views and access to various recreational areas.
³ Botanical Assessment of the Sorich Park Trail. Julian Geoghegan, MCOSD Senior Program Coordinator. October 2025.
⁴ Biological Report – Sorich Park Trail. Serena Hubert, MCOSD Wildlife Biologist. June 2025.

There are no known cultural or historical resources in the project area. 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 Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, 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 trail improvement at an existing public facility to lessen environmental impacts caused by erosion and sedimentation and a change-in-use to eliminate a gap in multi-use connection between the Town of San Anselmo and the Sun Valley and Terra Linda neighborhoods of San Rafael, consistent with the MCOSD's RTMP. 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. There are no known cultural resources present in, or immediately adjacent to the project area and the MCOSD would directly notify the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria should there be an inadvertent discovery during project implementation. There are no wetlands, Waters of the State, or Waters of the United States within the project area, no special-status plant species, habitats, or wildlife within the project area. Since project implementation would occur during bird nesting season, the MCOSD would conduct pre-construction nesting surveys and avoid construction in the area should an active nest be located to avoid direct loss of individual birds. On-going trail maintenance has occurred in the project area and would continue in 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.

Lead Agency Contact Person:



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