



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-12-107
Meeting 12-38
December 12, 2012

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM

Informational Presentation on Argentine Ant Research

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. G. G." or similar, written in a cursive style.

Receive an informational presentation on Argentine ant research.

SUMMARY

Researchers at Stanford University studied the potential for colonization of invasive Argentine ants in ten nature preserves, including revegetation projects sites within District Preserves. Results from this study will be presented to the Board of Directors.

DISCUSSION

Researchers will present portions of results from their Argentine ant study, which was awarded funding under the District's Resource Grants Program in 2007 (see Report R-07-122). The researchers surveyed for Argentine ants in ten preserves and found that the invasive ants are not present in six preserves, but are well established in Fremont Older and Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserves. Over five years (2008-2012), the study found that the ants were consistently established in areas near disturbance sites such as parking lots. The researchers developed a model that predicts the spread of Argentine ants in Fremont Older and Pulgas Ridge, using data from a related long-term monitoring project in Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. The model shows that ants are not likely to spread into preserves further than about 500 meters from human disturbance. This suggests that both the shape and size of preserves, relative to disturbed areas, will be crucial to preventing Argentine ant invasions. Third, the researchers developed a protocol for eliminating Argentine ants from native plants used in the tree farm restoration project at Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve. Because Argentine ants are commonly transported in nursery stock, application of this protocol can reduce the risk of inadvertent introduction of the invasive ants.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this presentation. The District granted \$25,000 for this research as part of the Resource Management Grant Program of which \$24,500 was spent between FY2009-10 and FY2010-11. The remaining \$500 will be paid in FY2012-13 upon

receipt of the final report. An additional contribution to the study in the amount of \$10,000 was made by an anonymous donor.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

Committee review of this item is not required.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act and persons on the Resource Management list were notified.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is a research project and therefore not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to refine and implement techniques to minimize the potential for Argentine ant colonization in restoration plantings projects. Staff will work with current and future contractors to promote awareness of Argentine ant invasions and techniques to remove them from container plants in the nursery.

Responsible Department Head:
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Department

Prepared by:
Joel Silverman, Resource Management Specialist I

Contact person:
Joel Silverman, Resource Management Specialist I