



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-13-25
Meeting 13-08
March 27, 2013

AGENDA ITEM 7

AGENDA ITEM

Authorization to Award Contract to Ecological Concerns Incorporated for Vegetation Management on Three Open Space Preserves in FY2013-14 and 2014-15.

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Ecological Concerns Incorporated of Santa Cruz, California in the amount not to exceed \$92,970 to provide vegetation management services including safe application of herbicides on Los Trancos, Skyline Ridge, and Russian Ridge Open Space Preserves in FY 2013-14 and 2014-15.

SUMMARY

The proposed work under this contract for services is the safe application of various herbicides and mechanical methods to control non-native plants and weeds on approximately 300 acres on three District open space preserves in FY2013-14 and 2014-15. A Request for Bids was sent to eleven selected vegetation management firms and one bid proposal was received. After thorough review of the proposal, staff recommends awarding the contract to Ecological Concerns Incorporated of Santa Cruz, California. Although Ecological Concerns, Inc. was the only bid proposal received, staff believes they have provided a responsible bid with a competitive Total Base Bid and they have the necessary licenses and prior experience performing invasive plant control in wildland conditions. This contract pertains to work that has been previously reviewed by the Board under three separate Mitigated Negative Declarations.

DISCUSSION

The District manages invasive plants and weeds on preserves to protect and restore the natural environment and to support conservation grazing. District field staff, contractors, the California Conservation Corps, and volunteers all assist in management of vegetation on preserves. Contractors are most frequently used for the initial control of large infestations. District staff oversees the work of contractors. When contractors are working near sensitive areas such as ponds with rare aquatic species, a District biologist is present to monitor the work and ensure that sensitive resources are protected. The District uses Integrated Pest Management practices when controlling invasive plants and weeds, and the contractor is required to follow 30 best management practices to protect the environment and human health.

The preserves included in this contract are:

- Los Trancos grasslands (Los Trancos Open Space Preserve) – spot spraying aminopyralid on yellow starthistle, spot spraying glyphosate on Harding grass, and mowing medusa head.
- Skyline Ridge tree farm restoration (Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve) – spot spraying aminopyralid on thistles, and spot spraying glyphosate on nonnative invasive grasses, broom and stinkwort.
- Mindego Ranch (Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve) – spot spraying thistles with aminopyralid, and spot spraying thistles and Harding grass with glyphosate.

Consultant Selection

A Request for Bids was issued on February 13, 2013, and advertised in local newspapers and on the District website. Eleven firms, known to have experience managing vegetation in park environments, were initially contacted by staff about the Request for Bids. An additional four firms inquired about the bid. Eight firms attended a mandatory pre-bid tour on February 21, 2013, at a representative treatment site. An addendum was issued on February 26, 2013, clarifying questions on the Request for Bids during and after the pre-bid tour.

Bids were due on March 7, 2013. The results are as follows:

| | Bidder | Location | Total Base Bid |
|----|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Ecological Concerns, Inc. | Santa Cruz, California | \$92,970 |

Although eight firms attended the mandatory pre-bid tour, most of the firms dropped out of the bid process. These firms told us they decided not to submit bids because their business is too far away, they could not take on this level of work in addition to their existing commitments, they decided to bid on another District project instead, or they were too slow in getting a bid bond. The Total Base Bid received from Ecological Concerns Inc. was approximately \$4,600 or five percent (5%) less than the staff's estimate, and the rates in Ecological Concerns' bid are similar to four other recent vegetation management contracts which the staff reviewed prior to issuance of the Request for Bids. Ecological Concerns' main business is doing vegetation management in wildland environments and they have provided the District with satisfactory work in the past.

FISCAL IMPACT

The District's FY2013-14 Action Plan and Budget for Facility Maintenance – Resource Management and Landscaping includes \$260,300, of which approximately \$61,000 was budgeted for one year of work with a vegetation management contractor. A similar amount is projected for FY2014-15.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

As noted below, the Board of Directors has previously made findings on each of the vegetation management activities covered under this contract. No additional Board Committee review is required.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this Agenda Item was provided per the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The vegetation management activities covered by this contract have all been previously reviewed in one or more of the following environmental documents under the California Environmental Quality Act:

- Site-Specific Weed and Pest Management Project Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration approved by the Board on May 9, 2012 (for Los Trancos grasslands site)
- Skyline Ridge Tree Farm Restoration Project Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, August 20, 2007 (for Skyline Ridge tree farm restoration site)
- Herbicide Application and Invasive Species Control at Mindego Ranch Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration approved by the Board on May 27, 2009 (for the Mindego Ranch site)

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the General Manager will be authorized to enter into a contract with Ecological Concerns, Incorporated, to conduct vegetation management on the three preserves.

Responsible Department Head:
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager

Prepared by:
Cindy Roessler, Senior Resource Management Specialist

Contact person:
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