



R-05-31
Meeting 05-06
March 23, 2005

AGENDA ITEM 7

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Authorization to Hire Rural Pig Management, Inc. to Conduct a Wild Pig Management Program on District Lands for Fiscal Year 05/06 for an amount not to exceed \$37,550 with an Option to Extend the Contract for Fiscal Years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Determine that the recommended actions are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) based on the findings contained in this report.
2. Authorize the General Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Rural Pig Management, Inc., to implement a wild pig management program with a budget not to exceed \$37,550 through March 31, 2006 with an Option to Extend the Contract For Fiscal Years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 subject to Board approval.

BACKGROUND

The District has conducted a wild pig management program since 2000. Wild pigs are not native to California, are regulated as a game mammal under the State Fish and Game law, have the potential to compete with native wildlife, and may negatively impact natural communities, particularly through their destructive rooting activities. Under the direction of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the District has developed a management program to capture wild pigs using baited traps and humane termination.

Rural Pig Management won a competitive bid process in 2000 and has trapped 281 pigs over a three and one-half year period (Reports R-00-102, R-99-102, R-02-01, R-03-40). As part of the program, the District coordinates with other land management agencies that are conducting wild pig management, maps and monitors pig rooting, and will be participating in a DNA study of pig populations with the University of California – Davis.

Pig activity on District lands has steadily decreased under this trapping program until the last few months when substantial rooting and sightings of wild pigs have been discovered at two new locations, Rancho de Guadalupe and Bear Creek Open Space Preserves.

NEW CONTRACT

The District requested proposals from 14 contractors to participate in the wild pig management program starting in 2005. Rural Pig Management submitted the best proposal with the most relevant experience and lowest costs. Based upon experience and cost, staff recommends contracting with Rural Pig Management for an amount not to exceed \$37,550 through March 31, 2006 with an option to extend the contract for Fiscal Years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The proposed project is for a wild pig management program on District lands to reduce the damage to natural resources. Within the past few months, there has been increased rooting activity by wild pigs on District lands. The damage caused by the feeding and rooting activities of the wild pigs has the potential for negative effects to natural resources including increased erosion, sedimentation in stream courses and wetlands, threat to sensitive flora and fauna, competition with native species and spreading of non-native invasive plants. Based on trapping efforts in past years, we estimate that approximately 200 pigs may be taken over the next 3 years of this wild pig management program. Other options for managing wild pig populations, including public hunting, poisoning, live capture and relocation, exclusionary fencing, chemical and immunological contraception, surgical contraception, and lethal injection have been determined to be either infeasible, ineffective, or have potential adverse environmental effects.

Continuation of the wild pig management program under this new contract is categorically exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guideline Section 15308. This exemption applies to actions taken by regulatory agencies under state laws for the protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.

Fish and Game Code 4181 permits any owner of land that is being damaged or in danger of being damaged by feral pigs to apply to the DFG for authorization to take and dispose of the mammals under regulations adopted by the commission. The DFG has adopted a comprehensive set of administrative regulations (set out in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations) that regulates the trapping, depredation and disposal of wild pigs. The adoption of these regulations was subject to environmental review as required by CEQA. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by and between the DFG and the District (Report R-00-102) identifies actions appropriate for wild pig management specific to District-owned lands in accordance with these regulations. The MOU may be terminated if conditions are violated. The DFG and the District have recently amended the MOU to cover lands in the Foothills Area.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

An agenda of this Board meeting was mailed to adjoining and neighboring property owners of the South Skyline area, and Rancho de Guadalupe and Bear Creek Open Space Preserves, and organizations and agencies interested in the wild pig management program.

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