



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PROCUREMENT AGENDA ITEM

R-25-166
Meeting 25-32
December 10, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 10

AGENDA ITEM

Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District for the Science and Stewardship Symposium

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to amend the Memorandum of Understanding with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (fiscal agent for the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network) to increase funding for the Science and Stewardship Symposium, raising the total not-to-exceed amount from the current \$12,000 to \$150,000 (a \$138,000 increase).

DISCUSSION

The Science and Stewardship Symposium is being planned as a one-day conference on January 30, 2026, with a target attendance of 200-250 people, comprised primarily of academic researchers and land management practitioners. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is partnering with the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network (Network) as the lead sponsor for the conference, with the Network leveraging the broad interest and participation from among its members who are part of the larger consortium of land conservation, research and stewardship practitioners. The San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) serves as the fiscal agent for the Network, collecting and managing its funding. The District previously executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with RCD providing initial funding in the amount of \$12,000 to facilitate contracting of event planning services and identifying a symposium venue. The General Manager recommends amending the \$12,000 MOU with an additional \$138,000 for a not to exceed total of \$150,000, which aligns with the approved budget amount set aside for the Symposium.

The Network's collaborative focus is a natural fit for the regional focus of the Science and Stewardship Symposium. A Symposium Project Team consisting of representatives from the RCD, California State Parks, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve ('Ootchamin 'Ooyakma), Bureau of Land Management, and Land Trust of Santa Cruz County has been formed to plan and implement the conference. As the Symposium coordinator, the Network has retained an event planning firm to manage the logistics for the one-day conference, including the event space reservation. The District will be the primary event sponsor, expecting to contribute \$150,000 for this effort. Other Network member organizations have also pledged funding towards the conference expenses.

The symposium will begin with a Plenary Session featuring keynote speakers:

- Dr. Jennifer Norris (Wildlife Conservation Board Executive Director)
- Dr. David Ackerly (Dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of California Berkeley)
- Dr. Dan Hankins (Professor of Geology and Environmental Studies at California State University Chico).

The plenary session will continue through the morning with a series of presentations on priority issues facing regional land managers.

Three Concurrent Sessions will be held in the afternoon with two to three hours of presentations. Following the afternoon concurrent sessions, the symposium will conclude with a closing plenary session to be followed by a hosted Poster Session and reception. Topics to be highlighted in the Symposium include wildland fire fuels management for healthy forests and the protection of infrastructure, ecosystem restoration in the face of climate driven change, and endangered species management and recovery. A mix of presenters will speak on each of these topical areas and reflect the mosaic of land ownership and management within the Santa Cruz Mountains, including public and non-profit agencies, private and working lands, native American traditional ecological knowledge, and scientific research.

BUDGET / FISCAL IMPACT

The current fiscal year budget for project 80098: Science and Stewardship Symposium contains:

- ☒ sufficient funds.
- ☐ insufficient funds; the next quarterly budget update will include a reallocation of unspent funds from other budgets to cover this expenditure.
- ☐ insufficient funds; approval of this item requires a fiscal year budget augmentation.
- ☐ future fiscal year budgets will include additional funds to complete the contracted work.

Measure AA

- ☒ No, this contract is not part of a Measure AA project.
- ☐ Yes, this contract is part of a Measure AA project.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION SUPPORTING THE PROJECT

None

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, the General Manager will amend the MOU with the RCD, as fiscal agent for the Network to provide funding for the Science and Stewardship Symposium scheduled for January 30, 2026.

Responsible Department Head:
Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager

Prepared by/contact person
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