



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-16-36
Meeting 16-08
April 13, 2016

AGENDA ITEM 7

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Authorization to Award Contract to Ecological Concerns, Inc. for Invasive Species Management on Four Projects in FY2015-16, FY2016-17, and FY2017-18.

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Ecological Concerns, Inc. of Santa Cruz, California in the amount not to exceed \$373,483 to provide invasive species management services including safe application of herbicides on District Open Space Preserves in FY2015-16, FY2016-17, and FY2017-18.

SUMMARY

The work consists of manual, mechanical, and the safe application of several herbicides consistent with the District's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program to control non-native plants and weeds for four projects on multiple District Open Space Preserves in FY2015-16, FY2016-17, and FY2017-18. A Request for Bids was sent to ten selected vegetation management firms; and two (2) proposals were received. After thorough review of the proposals, staff recommends awarding the contract to Ecological Concerns, Inc of Santa Cruz, CA who is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. The cost for these services will not exceed \$373,483 over two years.

MEASURE AA

Of the projects being awarded through this action, only the Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (OSP) restoration project is a component of the 5-year Measure AA Project List approved by the Board at their October 29, 2014 meeting. The Bear Creek Redwoods OSP project is identified as Project #21 Bear Creek Redwoods: Public Recreation and Interpretive Projects, and more specifically Project #21-7, Invasive Species Management.

DISCUSSION

Background

The District manages invasive plants 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 large infestations and for invasive species that have very specific treatment timing. District staff oversees the work of contractors, which includes monitoring by District biologists when contractors are working near sensitive areas such as ponds with rare aquatic

species. The District uses IPM practices when managing invasive plants and weeds, and the contractor is required to follow thirty best management practices to protect the environment and human health.

Four (4) priority projects were selected during the Integrated Pest Management Coordination Team meeting in December and included in the District's 2016 Annual IPM Plan. The four (4) priority projects include: (1) continuation and expansion of the Slender False Brome Program (see R-16-21), (2) implementation of the Bear Creek Redwoods Integrated Pest Management Plan (discussed in more detail below), (3) continuation, and expansion of contracted invasive vegetation control in rangelands at La Honda Creek Redwoods (see R-12-25), and (4) continuation and expansion of thistle and invasive grass control at four Preserves (Long Ridge, Los Trancos Russian Ridge, and Skyline Ridge OSPs).

In October of 2015, the District contracted with MIG/TRA to inventory, map, and create an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP) for fourteen (14) priority invasive species at Bear Creek Redwoods OSP. This IPMP will be the basis for the scope of work contracted for the Bear Creek Redwoods OSP in anticipation of this Preserve opening to the public.

Contractor Selection

The four (4) priority projects were combined into one Request for Bids (RFB) to reduce expenses associated with advertising and the administration costs and time commitment from District staff. District staff also believes that by combining the projects into one bid with a four year time frame, more qualifying bidders would be attracted due to the relatively larger scale and scope of the RFB, more competitive rates, and increased contractor knowledge of treatment methods and locations for consistent invasive species management for ecological restoration activities.

The RFB was issued on March 2, 2016 and advertised in local newspapers and on the District website. Ten firms, known to have experience managing vegetation in park environments, were directly notified by staff of the RFB. Two separate Bid-Walks were set up to ensure all Projects had representative sites visited. Six firms attended a mandatory pre-bid tour on March 14, 2016 at two (2) of the proposed treatment sites in the Skyline Area Preserves. Two firms attended a mandatory pre-bid tour on March 16, 2016 at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. Addendums were issued on March 19 and March 24, 2016 clarifying questions on the Request for Bids during and after the pre-bid tour.

Bids were due on March 29, 2016. The results are as follows:

Project #1: Slender False Brome

Bidder	Location	Total Bid for four years	Percent of Cost Estimate of \$100,000	Two Year Authorization Request	
1	Confluence Restoration	Santa Cruz, CA	\$141,000	141%	
2	Ecological Concerns, Inc.	Santa Cruz, CA	\$88,240	88%	\$44,120

Project #2: Bear Creek Redwoods

Bidder		Location	Total Bid for three years	Percent of Cost Estimate of \$200,000	Two Year Authorization Request
2	Ecological Concerns, Inc.	Santa Cruz, CA	\$189,634.50	95%	\$126,423

Project #3: La Honda Area

Bidder		Location	Total Bid for four years	Percent of Cost Estimate of \$140,000	Two Year Authorization Request
2	Ecological Concerns, Inc.	Santa Cruz, CA	\$130,920	94%	\$65,460

Project #4: Thistle and Grass Control

Bidder		Location	Total Bid for four years	Percent of Cost Estimate of \$292,000	Two Year Authorization Request
2	Ecological Concerns, Inc.	Santa Cruz, CA	\$274,960	94%	\$137,480

Ecological Concerns, Inc is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder for all four projects. The duration of the initial contract will be a two-year term, for a total of \$373,483. Additionally, an option to extend the contract's individual projects an additional two (2) years is included in the contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Natural Resources Department FY2015-16 Budget includes \$442,820 for Facility Maintenance – Resource Management and Landscaping of which approximately \$115,200 is budgeted for the remaining fiscal year for work with vegetation management contractors.

The Natural Resources Department FY2016-17 Budget request includes \$441,300 for Facility Maintenance – Resource Management and Landscaping of which approximately \$186,741.50 was budgeted for one year of work with a vegetation management contractor.

A similar amount is projected for FY2017-18 Budget request for Facility Maintenance – Resource Management and Landscaping of which \$71,812 will be budgeted for the remaining two year contract term.

If District staff elects to extend the contract, staff will return to the Board of Directors to obtain authorization to extend the contract for the additional two (2) years, raising the total project cost to \$683,754.

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.

- On December 10, 2014, the Board approved the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Integrated Pest Management Program.
- On June 24, 2015, the Board was updated on the Bear Creek Redwoods Preserve Plan, including actions necessary to restore native vegetation in anticipation of opening the preserve for public recreation in 2018 (see R-15-92).
- On March 9, 2016, the Board was updated on the Slender False Brome Program (see R-16-021).

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 been previously reviewed in the following environmental document under the California Environmental Quality Act, and the associated mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project:

- Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Integrated Pest Management Program approved by the Board on December 10, 2014.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the General Manager will be authorized to enter into a contract with Ecological Concerns, Inc of Santa Cruz.

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