



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-17-78
Meeting 17-15
June 28, 2017

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM

Agreement to Manage Slender False Brome on Private Properties near District Preserves

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Authorize the General Manager to:

1. Approve a cooperative agreement with the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District for a total of \$100,000 in Fiscal Year 2017-18 to treat slender false brome on private properties near District preserves.
2. Exercise the option to extend the agreement for a second and third year if the program is successful for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$300,000 over the three-year term.

SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) has a program to manage slender false brome (SFB) in San Mateo County to protect native redwood forests on its preserves and adjacent private lands. Since May of 2014, a significant component of this program has been a cooperative partnership with the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (RCD) to manage SFB on neighboring private parcels with the potential to infest District lands. If approved by the Board of Directors, this cooperative agreement would continue the partnership with the RCD to manage slender false brome on neighboring private property in the Woodside area for a three-year period.

DISCUSSION

Slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*, SFB) is a non-native, invasive perennial grass that is establishing in the redwood forests of San Mateo County and has the potential to alter the natural resources and fire risk of these native forests.

Previously, the District's SFB Program was managed primarily by a part-time contingent employee with the assistance of a part-time intern. On March 26, 2014 (see R-14-48), the District Board of Directors approved a three year cooperative agreement (similar to the agreement structure presented in this report) with the RCD to manage slender false brome on private properties in the Woodside area.

On March 9, 2016 (see R-16-21), the District Board of Directors approved a continuation of the SFB Program; a ten-year plan to eradicate SFB from Thornewood Open Space Preserve and the surrounding Woodside neighborhoods. Progress has been made on controlling SFB on District preserves and surrounding private properties. In areas where the RCD has performed multiple years of treatment of SFB on private property, the percent cover of the noxious weed has been

reduced from an average of 54% down to 19%. Additionally, the RCD worked with landowners to treat 61 acres on 14 properties, which are now maintained by the owners and are essentially SFB free. In 2009, the total net area of land infested with SFB was estimated to be 100 acres (40 acres of District land and 60 acres of adjacent private lands). This assessment underestimated the extent of the SFB infestation, as surveys were not conducted outside of the Woodside area prior to 2015. SFB infestation is now estimated to be 196 acres (40 acres of District land and 156 acres of adjacent private lands) due to an increase in search area. SFB has been identified within La Honda Creek, El Corte de Madera, and Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserves and surrounding areas. SFB found on District land is managed by a separate contract, staff, and volunteers. Since 2015, SFB has been treated on 105 private properties and over a total of 106 acres. An additional 34 critical properties consisting of 1,243 acres have been surveyed and found to be free of slender false brome.

The RCD has partnered with the District in managing the control of SFB on private property and they are well-qualified to continue assisting the District in this type of work. The RCD is a non-regulatory special district that works directly with private property owners to protect, conserve, and restore natural resources through information, education, and technical assistance programs. Their staff has experience surveying for invasive plants, GIS mapping, community outreach, and funding the installation of resource protection projects on private properties.

This three-year cooperative agreement would fund the RCD in managing the control of SFB on private properties in San Mateo County. The amount of private property acres to be treated is expected to be approximately 110 acres and to occur on the approximately 105 private properties in the Woodside and La Honda areas per year. Similar to the District's last agreement with the RCD, Years Two and Three of this agreement are optional and contingent on both parties determining that the first year is successful. In Year Two and Year Three, the treatment acres are expected to increase by approximately ten percent. The RCD would be responsible for communicating with the private property owners, surveying their properties, treating slender false brome therein, post-treatment surveys, and submitting progress reports to the District. The District will continue to fund treatment of SFB on properties near District preserves (and therefore pose a risk of infesting District lands). The agreement allows the RCD to apply for and receive grant funds from other sources for treatment of SFB at other locations in San Mateo County that are not near District preserves.

FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed FY2017-18 budget includes funds in the amount of \$100,000 for the first year of a new three year agreement for managing SFB on private properties. Should this agreement be extended for years two through three, funding would be included as part of the proposed annual budgets for consideration by the Board of Directors.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

No committee review was completed for this contract extension. The full Board of Directors received an update on the SFB program on March 9, 2016 and approved a 10-year work program to control SFB on District lands, including continuing to partner with the RCD on control efforts.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The treatment of SFB was evaluated in the District's Integrated Pest Management Program, Environmental Impact Report, adopted by the Board of Directors on December 14, 2014. The RCD will follow all conditions set out by that environmental review.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the General Manager will be authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the RCD to manage slender false brome on private properties in the Woodside and La Honda areas.

Responsible Department Head:
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resource Manager

Prepared by:
Coty Sifuentes-Winter, IPM Coordinator