



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-21-51  
Meeting 2112  
April 28, 2021

## AGENDA ITEM 5

### AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract with Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting for Botanical Services at Cloverdale Ranch

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to contract with Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting of Berkeley, CA, to provide botanical services at Cloverdale Ranch for a base contract amount of \$118,805.
2. Authorize an allowance of \$12,000 to cover additional biological surveys if significant populations of rare or invasive plant species are discovered that may require additional time (or seasons) to survey, for a grand total contract amount not-to-exceed \$130,805.

### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is conducting due diligence inspections of the Peninsula Open Space Trust's (POST) 6,200-acre Cloverdale Ranch Property for a potential purchase. A critical component of this work involves the completion of onsite biological surveys and vegetation mapping. The primary objective of this component is to inventory critical vegetation information about the property to understand its unique natural resources. This data can also be used in the future to sustain and promote viable and diverse native plant community characteristic in the region. The General Manager recommends awarding a contract to Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting (Vollmar) of Berkeley, CA, for a base amount of \$118,805 to complete botanical surveys, mapping, and analysis. An allowance of \$12,000 is also requested to cover additional biological surveys at the sole discretion of the District, for a grand total not-to-exceed \$130,805. The Fiscal Year 2020-21 (FY21) budget includes sufficient funds to complete work through June 30. Funding for future year budgets would be requested as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

### BACKGROUND

The District stewards a diverse mix of ecosystems, including coastal scrub, grasslands, conifer forest, and chaparral. Open spaces provide sources of clean water, varied recreation opportunities, support agricultural uses and local food production, and protect scenic landscapes, wildlife habitat, and vital refuge for many threatened, endangered, and special status species. Our local natural resources provide numerous ecological, economic, and social benefits that are vitally interlinked to nearby communities. However, the health of the region's natural resources is threatened by global climate change, altered fire regimes, invasive non-native plants and animals, habitat fragmentation, plant diseases and pathogens, noise/light/air pollution, and other

human and natural impacts. To effectively care for ecosystems, land managers must know the location and distribution of ecosystems across sites and monitor any changes over time.

## DISCUSSION

The District is conducting due diligence inspections of POST's 6,200-acre Cloverdale Ranch Property as a potential future purchase. The primary objective of this work is to inventory critical vegetation information about the property to understand its unique natural resources. This data can also be used in the future to sustain and promote viable and diverse native plant community characteristic in the region. The Scope of Services under the recommended contract to complete this work includes the following:

- Map and describe the existing plant communities and formulate site-specific vegetation management goals as part of a Resource Management Plan for Cloverdale Ranch.
- Identify the location and condition of special status plants and their habitats as part of a Resource Management Plan for Cloverdale Ranch. Conduct surveys for special status plants during the appropriate season.
- Identify appropriate areas for restoring lost or altered native plant communities to a natural condition.

On March 4, 2021, staff issued a Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQP) by posting on the District's website and BidSync, as well as emailing five firms with pertinent experience. Twenty-two firms reviewed the RFQP on BidSync. The District received the following four proposals by the March 26, 2021 deadline:

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposed Fee</b>
H.T. Harvey	Los Gatos, CA	\$109,874
BioMaAS	San Francisco, CA	\$117,990
<b>Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting</b>	<b>Berkeley, CA</b>	<b>\$118,805</b>
AECOM	Sacramento, CA	\$119,919

Evaluation criteria were determined before the release of the RFQP that included the quality of the proposal, relevant botanical experience, and implementation approach. After careful review of all proposals, staff deemed Vollmar as the most qualified and best suited for the project at a fair and reasonable price. Vollmar demonstrated a clear understanding of the project to meet the multiple project objectives. In addition to the prior experience working at Cloverdale Ranch with POST, Vollmar provided a detailed approach to multiple different survey protocols that will allow efficient long-term monitoring of both rangeland and non-rangeland areas. Cost saving measures to allow for more field time were also included in the proposal.

Vollmar proposes to include District volunteers (i.e., Advanced Resource Management Stewards, Docents, and/or Preserve Partners) as part of the plot sampling team as an optional approach with no change to the project budget. Much of the fieldwork and data collection can be done by competent volunteers (plot layout, photography, GPS plot location mapping, etc.). The sampling would be led by one experienced botanist with up to six volunteers assisting. The District is currently limiting volunteer opportunities to people currently authorized to work under the District's Covid safety protocols. When Covid restrictions are lifted, District staff will also reach out to local Pescadero and surrounding residents for opportunities to engage in this fieldwork.

This fieldwork provides an opportunity to discuss the overall site ecology and conservation values with member of the public to enhance the volunteer experience.

An allowance of up to \$12,000 is requested in the event significant populations of rare or invasive plant species are discovered that may involve additional time (or seasons) to survey.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The FY21 adopted budget includes \$70,000 for the Cloverdale Ranch Land Opportunity project. There are sufficient funds in the budget to cover the recommended action and expenditures.

<b>Cloverdale Ranch Land Opportunity VP13-001</b>	<b>Prior Year Actuals</b>	<b>FY21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY22 Projected</b>	<b>FY23 Projected</b>	<b>Estimated Future Years</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Total Budget:</b>	<b>\$6,036</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$92,000</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$243,036</b>
Spent-to-Date (as of 4/6/2021):	(\$6,036)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$6,036)
Encumbrances:	\$0	(\$15,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$15,000)
Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting Award of Contract:	\$0	(\$39,805)	(\$39,500)	(\$39,500)	\$0	(\$118,805)
Allowance:	\$0	\$0	(\$12,000)	\$0	\$0	(\$12,000)
<b>Budget Remaining (Proposed):</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$15,195</b>	<b>\$40,500</b>	<b>\$35,500</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$91,195</b>

The recommended action is not funded by Measure AA.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW**

A Board Committee did not previously review this item.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

Entering into an agreement with Vollmar is not a project under CEQA. Retention of professional consultants will not result in a direct physical change to the environment [CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2)].

### **NEXT STEPS**

Following Board approval, the General Manager would execute a contract with Vollmar.

Attachment

1. Map of Cloverdale

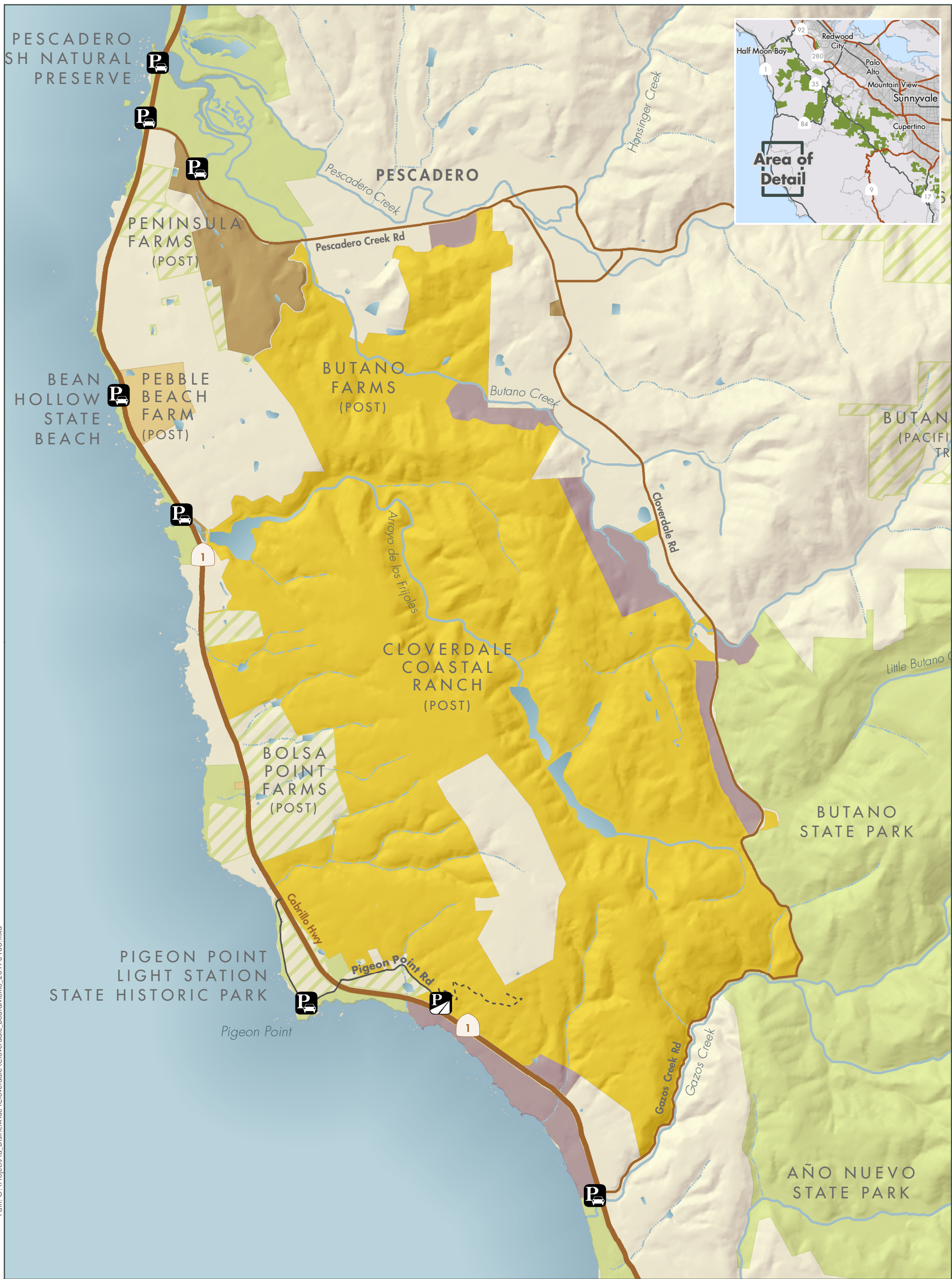
Responsible Department Head:  
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources

Prepared by:

Coty Sifuentes-Winter, Senior Resource Management Specialist, Natural Resources

Graphics prepared by:

Nathan Greig, Data Analyst II



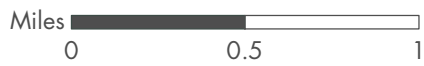
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Created By: ngrsig

### POST Cloverdale Coastal Ranches Complex

- |   |                       |   |   |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|
|  | MROSD Preserves       |  | Proposed Lands to be transferred to Midpen Draft Data |
|  | Other Protected Lands |  | Proposed Lands to be retained by POST Draft Data      |
|  | Private Property      |  | Non-MROSD Conservation Easement                       |
|  | Land Trust            |  | Wilbur's Watch Trail                                  |
|  | Other Public Agency   |   |   |

Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District  
(MROSD)  
January 2017



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, these data do not represent a legal survey and are merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.