



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-21-160  
Meeting 21-33  
December 8, 2021

## AGENDA ITEM 4

### AGENDA ITEM

Award of contract with Balance Hydrologics for sediment-source inventory and water-quality plan development services in the Pescadero-Butano and San Gregorio Watersheds

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS *den*

1. Authorize the General Manager to enter into an agreement with Balance Hydrologics of Berkeley, CA, to provide sediment-source inventory and water-quality plan development services in the Pescadero-Butano and San Gregorio Watersheds for a base contract amount of \$203,681.
2. Authorize a 15% contingency of \$30,552 to cover unforeseen tasks beyond the current scope for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$234,233.

### SUMMARY

To comply with the Pescadero-Butano sediment Total Maximum Daily Load and San Gregorio Water Quality Improvement Plan requirements that have been issued for the entire Pescadero-Butano and San Gregorio Watersheds, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) must inventory its road networks in El Corte De Madera, La Honda Creek, Russian Ridge, Skyline Ridge, and Long Ridge Open Space Preserves and use the inventory to develop long-term plans for reducing sediment in streams within each watershed. Other landowners throughout both watersheds are also required to conduct similar activities. The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) initiated these plans to improve stream habitat for aquatic species like steelhead trout within both watersheds, which have been negatively impacted by sediment produced from a variety of legacy and present-day land uses, such as logging dating as early as the 1870s. The General Manager recommends awarding a contract to Balance Hydrologics for a base contract amount of \$203,681. The General Manager additionally recommends authorizing a 15% contingency in the amount of \$30,552 to cover additional site investigations, if needed, for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$234,233. There are sufficient funds in the adopted Fiscal Year 2021-22 (FY22) operating budget to cover anticipated expenditures through the end of June 2022. Funding for future year budgets will be requested as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

### DISCUSSION

In 1998, the RWQCB listed the Pescadero-Butano and San Gregorio Creek Watersheds as impaired by sedimentation under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Excessive sediment in streams negatively impacts a range of aquatic species, including steelhead trout and coho salmon. RWQCB staff continued to investigate sediment sources and water quality over the next

two decades but found that conditions had not improved. During their investigation, the RWQCB identified roads as a key contributor to poor water quality by being a source of increased sediment loads in streams that are above background levels. By reducing erosion of unpaved roads, the RWQCB aims to conserve and augment steelhead trout populations; restore an annual spawning run of coho salmon; protect and enhance habitat for native aquatic species; and protect and enhance the aesthetic and recreational values of the creek and its tributaries.

To accomplish these goals, in 2018 the RWQCB adopted a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan for the entire Pescadero-Butano Watershed, of which the District owns around 8% with 3,800 acres of land in fee and another 400 acres under easement (Attachment 1). The plan requires landowners throughout the watershed to inventory sediment sources from roads and then to limit the conveyance of sediment downstream to a prescribed volume over a 20-year period through road improvements, similar to the Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) implemented in El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve from 2002 to 2016. The work performed as part of the WPP gives the District a vital head-start on sediment reduction in the San Gregorio watershed. Sediment measurements in El Corte de Madera Creek have demonstrated the efficacy of the WPP road and trail work in reducing sediment input to waterways and improving downstream stream habitat. District lands in the Pescadero-Butano Watershed contain over 26 miles of roads, many of which have been improved over time (e.g., Big Dipper Ranch road repairs in Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve and routine maintenance to improve culvert crossings). State or County maintained roads in the watershed total more than 140 miles, and many more miles of roads exist on private lands (roughly half of the watershed's land area) but these are generally unmapped.

Actions required by the TMDL primarily include upgrading culverts and decommissioning abandoned roads. Addressing other sediment sources, like unstable banks in stream channels, also positively accelerate watershed restoration. The District has voluntarily undertaken much of this work through routine maintenance and best management practices, however, some sites have yet to be formally evaluated and require updating since some inventories were conducted more than 15 years ago.

In October 2021, the RWQCB adopted the Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for the San Gregorio Watershed to reduce sedimentation in San Gregorio Creek. The District owns nearly 40% of the San Gregorio Watershed with about 12,900 acres of land in fee and another 350 acres under easement (Attachment 1). The San Gregorio WQIP calls for continued or expanded voluntary measures over the next 20 years rather than regulatory (and mandatory) actions like permits issued by the RWQCB under the Pescadero-Butano TMDL. Past work has again provided the District a substantial head-start in meeting RWQCB standards.

Because the WQIP calls for identical sediment assessment and reduction actions as the TMDL, compliance with both water-quality plans can best and most cost-effectively be accomplished under a single project for this initial phase of work. If the recommended contract is approved, work in the Pescadero-Butano Watershed would take place during FY22 and in the San Gregorio Watershed during FY23.

First, an inventory would help to prioritize which sites to address to meet the RWQCB's performance criteria. Using the inventory, the consultant would then create a set of sediment-reduction recommendations, including cost estimates for implementation. The scale, timeframe, and extent of the sediment-reducing actions remains to be determined. District staff would use

this information to submit a water-quality plan to the RWQCB for each watershed detailing the District's proposed approach for compliance. The District would submit the TMDL water-quality plan to the RWQCB in 2022, but the WQIP plan would likely not be submitted until 2024. Based on the work proposed in the plans, sediment-reducing actions would then gradually be implemented over the next two decades.

#### *Consultant Selection*

The District issued a Request for Proposals and Qualifications (RFPQ) on September 16, 2021 that was viewed by 41 firms. An optional pre-proposal conference call was held on October 11 and attended by four firms. The District received four proposals on November 5, 2021.

Evaluation criteria included prior experience with sediment inventories and water-quality plans; creative project approaches to the scope of work and schedule; and knowledge of California and San Mateo County permitting and regulations.

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposed Fee</b>
Pacific Watershed Associates	Petaluma, CA	\$201,050
Balance Hydrologics	Berkeley, CA	\$203,681
FlowWest	Oakland, CA	\$209,429
Waterways Consulting, Inc.	Santa Cruz, CA	\$263,525

Balance Hydrologics was deemed the most qualified consultant to provide the services and its proposal reflects a clear understanding of the project scope, including completion of the inventory and sediment-reduction recommendations within the proposed timeframe. It also stands out among the proposals by including an environmental permitting review to help guide the District's long-term plans for implementing the recommendations and a strong technical basis for hydraulic modeling and database development required to inventory and catalogue each site. These services are offered at a fair and reasonable price and provide the District cost savings by bundling the work in both watersheds.

To cover potential additional, unanticipated scope if needed, the General Manager recommends a 15% contingency of \$30,552, for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$234,233.

Contingency funds may be necessary for additional investigations of high-priority sites currently unknown to District staff.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There are sufficient funds in the adopted FY22 operating budget to cover anticipated expenditures through the end of June 2022. Funding for future year budgets will be requested as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

#### **BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

September 11, 2019: Board FYI regarding the Pescadero-Butano TMDL.

- [FYI Pescadero-Butano TMDL](#)

- [Minutes](#)

August 25, 2021: Board FYI regarding the San Gregorio WQIP.

- [FYI San Gregorio Water Quality Plan](#)
- [Minutes](#)

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

## **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

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

## **NEXT STEPS**

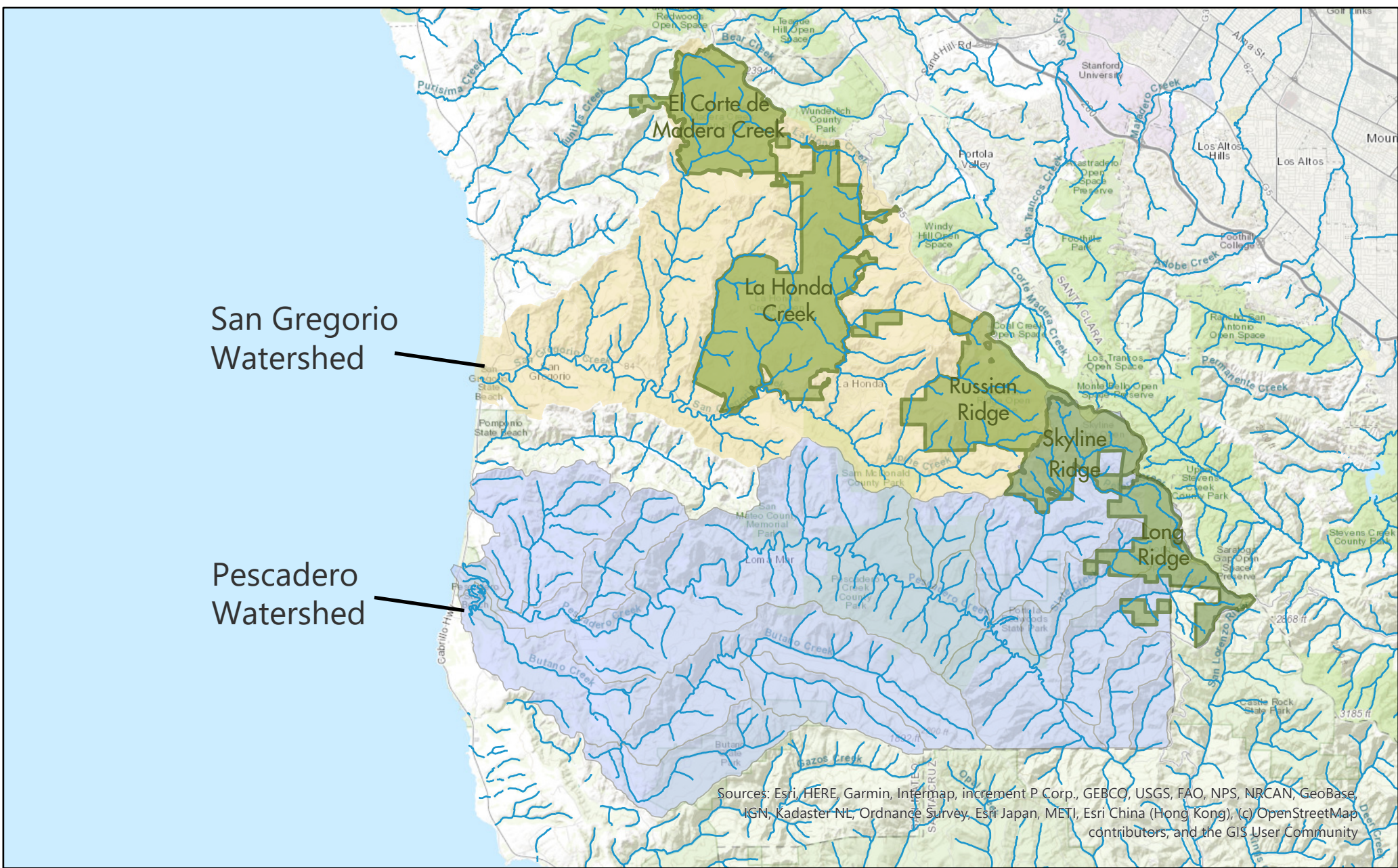
Following Board approval, the General Manager will execute a contract with Balance Hydrologics. District staff anticipate Balance Hydrologics' complete inventory and set of recommendations in spring 2022. Staff can then prepare and submit the Pescadero-Butano TMDL water-quality plan to the RWQCB.

Attachment:

1. Map of District lands within the Pescadero-Butano and San Gregorio Creek Watersheds

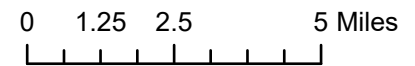
Responsible Department Head:  
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Department

Contact person and Prepared by:  
David Liefert, Water Resources Specialist, Natural Resources Department



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

### Midpen preserves within the Pescadero and San Gregorio Watersheds



- Stream
- Preserve Boundary
- Watershed Boundary**
- Parent Watershed Name**
- San Gregorio
- <all other values>
- Pescadero

