



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-23-53  
Meeting 23-14  
May 24, 2023

### AGENDA ITEM 3

#### AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract to Bay Area Tree Specialists for Wildland Fire Fuel Treatments and Tree Maintenance Services

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute an initial one-year term contract (Year 1) with Bay Area Tree Specialists of San Jose, California in the amount of \$351,400 for District-wide wildland fire fuel treatments and tree maintenance services.
2. Authorize the General Manager to extend the contract with Bay Area Tree Specialists for up to four additional one-year terms, each at a \$500,000 annual cost, based on contractor performance, for a not-to-exceed base contract amount of \$2,351,400 over the five-year term.
3. Authorize a 15% contingency in the amount of \$352,710 over the five-year term to address unforeseen issues, for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$2,704,110 over the five-year term.

#### SUMMARY

Wildland fire fuel treatments and tree maintenance are essential land management functions of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District). The District issued a Request for Bids (RFB) on March 9, 2023 for wildland fire fuel treatments and tree maintenance services. These services will support the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program (WFRP) and general tree management throughout all 26 (soon to be 27) open space preserves. The District received four (4) bid proposals on April 11, 2023. The General Manager recommends awarding an initial one-year contract (Contract) to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, Bay Area Tree Specialists, for a base contract amount of \$351,400 to perform fuel treatment and tree maintenance services District-wide. The General Manager also requests authorization to amend the Contract to extend the term for four (4) additional one-year terms at \$500,000 per year, subject to contractor performance, for a total not-to-exceed Contract amount of \$2,351,400 over the five-year term. In the event additional unanticipated work is required during each contract year, the General Manager also recommends authorizing a 15% contingency, bringing the total not-to-exceed five-year contract amount to \$2,704,110 (assuming all annual extensions are executed). The adopted Fiscal Year 2022-23 (FY23) budget includes sufficient funds to cover the work through the end of the fiscal year. Funding for future fiscal years will be requested as part of the annual budget and action plan process.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Project includes key components of the WFRP work plan. Enhanced fire management and non-native tree removal in Skyline Ridge and Windy Hill Open Space Preserve (Preserves) are part of the Project scope. These areas were identified using the tiered prioritization process specified in the WFRP and are partially funded by a State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) Grant for Wildland Fire and Capacity Building. The Enhanced Fire Management component of the Project supports the goals of the WFRP by treating ladder fuels and thinning overcrowded forests that have developed as the result of decades of fire suppression activities. Over 80% of the wildland fuel treatment work specified in the Project is within either a Tier 1 or Tier 2 prioritization area. The Project will also implement a proactive tree assessment within Tree Management Zones (TMZ) across the District. TMZ's are high use areas in District preserves having a greater likelihood of impacts due to tree failure. TMZs include areas such as storage structures; field and administrative offices; designated preserve parking lots; picnic tables; and campground areas. The Project will develop maintenance recommendations, which will be used to prioritize both enhanced fire management and tree maintenance within the TMZ. The proposed Contract includes funding for the tree management work, at the discretion of the District, that results from the assessment of TMZs.

The Contract has been prepared so that after the initial contract year, the District would have the option of annual extensions based on contractor performance for up to four additional years. The first calendar year of work extends through December 31, 2023 (Year 1). At the District's option, based on contractor performance and WFRP and TMZ work priorities, the District and Contractor will meet in the fall of each year to develop the scope of work for the subsequent calendar year (Annual Work Plan) using the WFRP prioritization process and the recommendations generated from the TMZ assessment.

### **Project Description**

The purpose of the Contract is to provide ecologically sensitive enhanced fire management & tree maintenance at various sites throughout District preserves. The scope of the fuel reduction work includes mechanical, manual, and limited pesticide use (e.g., treating cut stumps with herbicide) to create fuel breaks, shaded fuel breaks, and community escape routes. The Contract includes fuel reduction treatments at multiple locations during Year 1.

The Year 1 Annual Work Plan includes an 11-acre emergency access/evacuation escape route planned in lower Windy Hill Preserve (Attachment 1) along Alpine Road (Alpine) and the Meadow Trail Driveway Bypass. The work will enhance connectivity to Alpine Road and safe passage for emergency response personnel, preserve visitors, and community members in the event of a wildfire. The treatment site ties into previous work completed by the District near the Windy Hill parking lot and the Sequoias Portola Valley retirement community as well as fuel reduction along Alpine Road completed by the Woodside Fire Protection District. The work includes the mechanical and manual treatment of ladder fuels in oak woodland and savanna using masticators, hand crews and chippers. The terrain includes steep slopes greater than 30% and is adjacent to several sensitive natural communities, including both valley oak and bigleaf maple forest and woodlands, in the riparian corridor along Corte Madera Creek. This work is partially funded by the SCC.

Another project site location is a planned 25-acre shaded fuel break in Skyline Ridge Preserve (Attachment 2) southwest of Alpine Road and Skyline Boulevard in the vicinity of the David C. Daniels Nature Center and the Skyline Field Office (SFO). This work will create a shaded fuel break along Alpine Road. The scope of work includes manual & mechanical fuel reduction in coyote brush scrub, coast live and canyon live oak woodland and forest biomes, including slopes greater than 30%. A component of the fuel reduction work at the SFO project site also includes the removal of approximately 80 trees greater than 8 inches in diameter at breast height, which are primarily non-native evergreen conifers. The purpose of the tree treatments is to selectively remove trees that are either dead, dying, damaged, diseased, or a non-native introduced species in order to interrupt the horizontal continuity of wildland fire fuels by decreasing tree stand density (or basal area per acre) while also increasing forest health. This work is partially funded by the SCC. Work in future years is anticipated to extend this fuel break to the west along Alpine Road in Skyline Ridge and Russian Ridge Preserves.

Additionally, in preserves such as Thornewood, Coal Creek, and Bear Creek Redwoods, WFRP work has been conducted or is under way to create an emergency access/evacuation route and shaded fuel breaks. To enhance and maintain these fuel management sites, 36 large (greater than 8 inches in diameter at breast height) trees are planned for removal. Similar to the tree removal discussed above, the purpose is to selectively remove trees that are either dead, dying, damaged, diseased, or non-native introduced species in order to reduce the risk of wildfire by interrupting the horizontal continuity of wildland fire fuels by decreasing tree stand density (or basal area per acre) while also increasing forest health.

The scope of the tree maintenance includes tree pruning, removal, arborist services (such as tree inspections, inventory data collection, and arborist reports), and the provision and maintenance of a tree inventory system. There are elements of tree maintenance services (primarily tree removal) included in the planned fuel reduction work. Lastly, a significant component of the work is to complete an assessment of Tree Maintenance Zones (TMZs). TMZs have been identified in areas, such as designated preserve parking areas, where visitor use is higher than in other less developed areas of District lands. The assessment will include inspection and inventory all the trees in the TMZs to evaluate their condition so that tree maintenance needs can be identified and managed.

### **Contractor Selection**

A Request for Bids (RFB) was issued on March 9, 2023, via BidSync and released to five builders' exchanges. Legal notices were posted in the San Jose Mercury News and the San Mateo County Times, and a link to the solicitation was posted on the District website. A mandatory pre-bid site walk was held on March 17, 2022, with 11 contractors in attendance.

The following bids were publicly opened by the District on April 11, 2023:

<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Total Bid</b>	<b>Percent Difference from Cost Estimate of \$400,000</b>
Bay Area Tree Specialist	San Jose, CA	\$251,400	-46%
Julian Tree Service	Richmond, CA	\$380,850	-5%
Professional Tree Care Company	Berkeley, CA	\$502,700	23%
West Coast Arborists	Anaheim, CA	\$1,274,674	105%

The General Manager recommends awarding the contract to Bay Area Tree Specialist as the lowest responsible and responsive bidder.

After bids were received and the lowest responsible and responsive bidder was identified, staff negotiated the Year 1 Contract scope of work and final price to add additional hours for tree maintenance and cleanup work (partly in response to the storm damage experienced this past winter and to capture future TMZ recommendations) and other related fuel treatment and tree management activities. The final Year 1 Contract amount comes to \$351,400 and is based on pricing provided in the original bid. Bay Area Tree Service is aware of this additional work, which will be assigned by task order and charged based on unit and hourly pricing.

### **Anticipated Annual Contract Amount in Future Years**

Each year the District will go through a process to evaluate new Tier 1 and tier 2 priority projects and previous work that requires maintenance as part of the WFRP in the upcoming year. In addition, tree maintenance work will be prioritized and scheduled annually, at the discretion of the District, based on the needs identified in the tree inventory and assessment generated in the Year 1 of the Contract. It is anticipated that the base work for each subsequent year will be \$500,000 per year.

### **Contingency Amount**

A contingency of 15% is recommended to address unexpected complexities in carrying out the work, such as: additional natural resource protection measures; limited accessibility to project sites for equipment and labor based on changing road and soil conditions; and the unforeseen need for special equipment (such as aerial tower or crane) to safely remove trees in proximity to infrastructure. Three of the Year 1 project sites are located adjacent to sensitive natural communities and/or sensitive species. The WFRP work is immediately adjacent to arroyo thickets and known habitats for Western pond turtles, Californian wood rats, and potential red legged frog habitat. The WFRP work in Windy Hill is adjacent to several sensitive natural communities, including valley oak and bigleaf maple forest and woodlands and the riparian corridor along Corte Madera Creek. Lastly the tree removal work in Thornewood is located immediately adjacent to redwood forest communities. In addition, all the project sites have steep topography with slopes greater than 30%, constraining access and work zones. These factors can create delays and add costs. Tree removal work in Skyline Ridge, Bear Creek Redwoods, Coal Creek, and Thornewood is immediately adjacent to sensitive cultural resources and infrastructure (e.g., buildings and utilities). Removal work may require the use of rigging and special equipment to safely conduct tree work if structural weaknesses, such as extensive wood decay, are encountered. Moreover, additional priority tree removal and pruning may be identified by the District based on the TMZ findings. Also, if future winter storms generate significant tree debris and down material, the contingency can be used to treat these areas.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There are sufficient funds in the amended FY23 budget to cover the cost of the recommendations through the end of the fiscal year. Funds will be recommended in future fiscal year budgets as a part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

## **PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW**

This contract was not previously presented to the Board or Committees.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

## **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

Pursuant to Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines, the District has determined that the tree maintenance and wildland fire fuel treatment activities as contemplated herein is within the scope of the approved Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, and the Final Environmental Impact Report to the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, and Addenda thereto, adopted by Board Resolution No. 2114 on May 12, 2021; and Integrated Pest Management Program, and the Final Environmental Impact Report to the Integrated Pest Management Program, adopted by Board Resolution No. 14-37 on December 10, 2014.

## **NEXT STEPS**

If approved by the Board, the General Manager will enter into a contract with Bay Area Tree Specialist to complete wildland fire fuel treatments and tree maintenance work for calendar year 2023. Also, the District will evaluate Contractor performance each year and consider whether to extend the Contract annually for up to five total years.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 Windy Hill Project Location Map

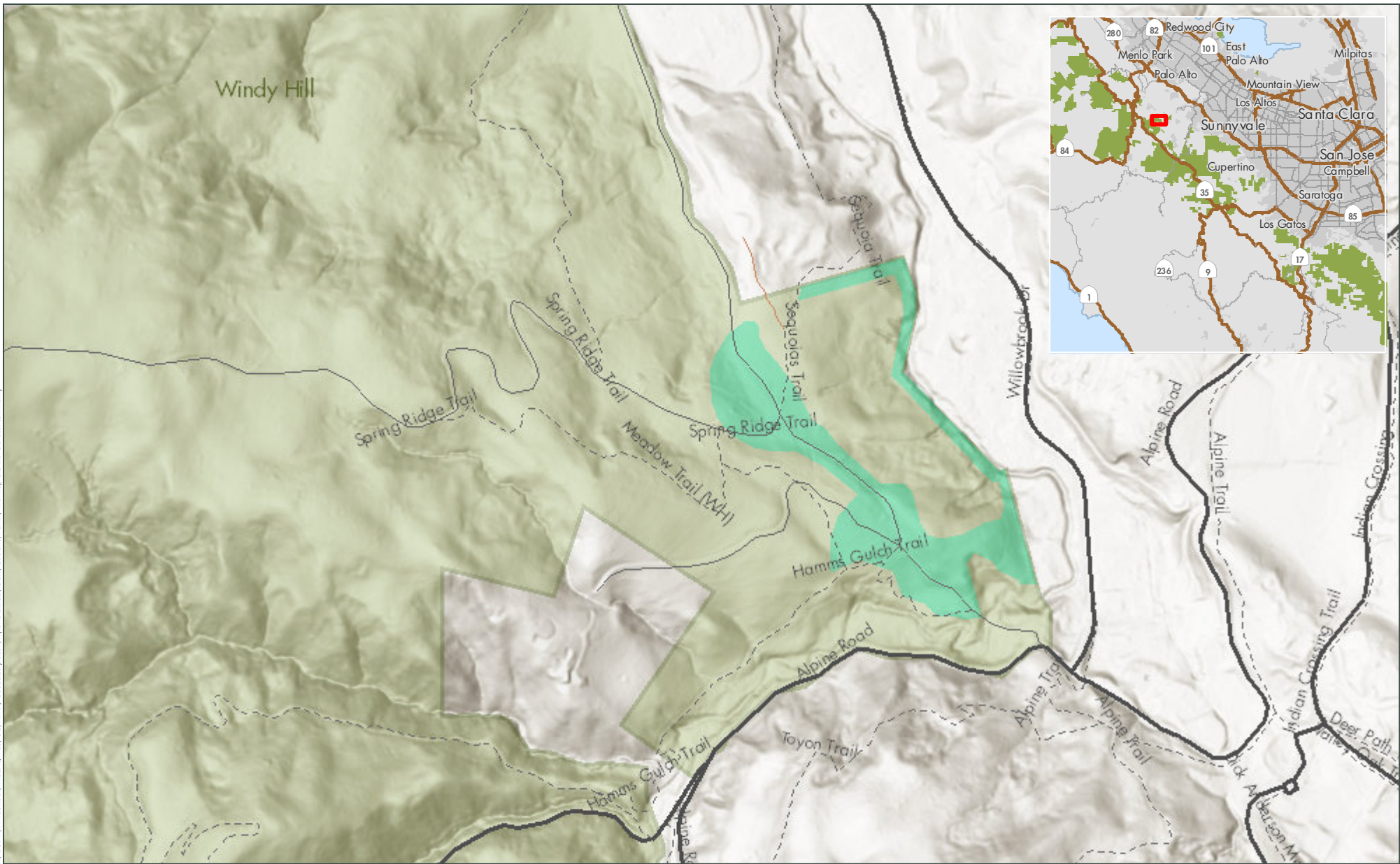
Attachment 2 Skyline Project Location Map

Responsible Department Head:

Brandon Stewart, Land and Facilities Department

Prepared by / Contact person / Graphics prepared by:

Christian Bonner, Field Resource Specialist, Land and Facilities Department



## 4b Lower Windy Hill/ Willowbrook Fuel Treatment

**References\_9744** — Abandoned / Unmaintained Road

— Paved Road

— Unpaved Road

— Unpaved Road

- - - Trail

**VegetationManagementAr...**

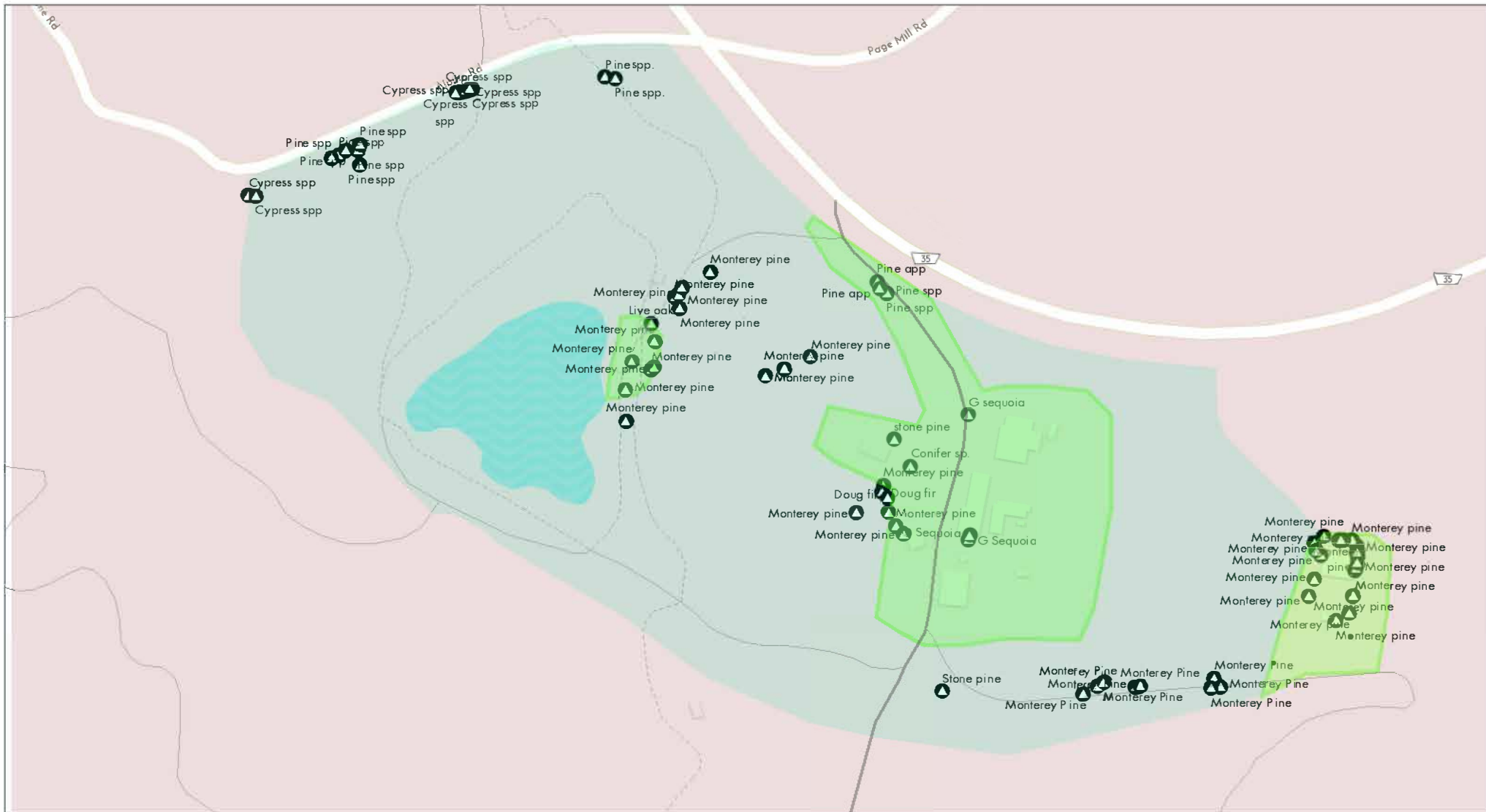
■ Fuel Treatment Area

■ Preserve Boundary

## ATTACHMENT 1

Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District  
(MROSD)  
3/22/2023





**2.a, 2b -SFO/Alpine Nature Center TMZ, Fuel Reduction & Tree Removal**

- References\_9744 VegetationManagementAr...**
- Paved Road
  - Unpaved Road
  - Unpaved Road
  - Trail
  - Fuel Reduction Area
  - Tree Management Zone Inven...
  - ▲ Tree Removal Point

**ATTACHMENT 2**

Midpeninsula Regional  
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Data Source: ArcGIS

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.