



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PROCUREMENT AGENDA ITEM

R-26-15
Meeting 26-05
February 11, 2026

AGENDA ITEM 4

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Contract Amendment with Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting to include surveys of Western Pond Turtle at Cherry Springs Pond in Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve as part of the Districtwide Survey and Assessment of Sensitive-Status Herpetofauna (Amphibians and Reptiles) Species

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract amendment with Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting in the amount of \$20,000 for additional biological consulting services at Cherry Springs Pond to support the Districtwide Herpetofauna and Aquatic Habitat Assessment project, for a new contract amount not-to-exceed \$267,282.

DISCUSSION

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) acquired the Rancho de Guadalupe area of Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve in 1995. The Rancho de Guadalupe area includes Cherry Springs Pond where western pond turtles (WPT) were previously detected in 2019 as part of a previous survey (Allaback and Alvarez, 2019). WPT is a species of special concern that is being considered for listing as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. In 2025, Vollmar biologists conducted a visual survey for WPT at Cherry Springs Pond, consistent with the level of effort captured in the Districtwide Herpetofauna and Aquatic Habitat Assessment contract scope of work across all survey sites. That survey was inconclusive, prompting an interest to conduct a more intensive survey following protocols set forth in the 2019 survey. It should be noted that conditions at the pond have changed over time, with the pond becoming significantly overgrown with vegetation, making it challenging to navigate and maintain visibility during surveys. Funds proposed in this contract amendment would allow Vollmar time to conduct trapping and thoroughly survey the pond over several days. Results from this robust Year 2 survey would promote confidence on species presence or absence at Cherry Springs Pond.

Since the District is midway through a comprehensive herpetofauna analysis, it is timely and cost-efficient to expand Vollmar's scope to confidently detect and quantify turtle presence and abundance (or absence). Obtaining this information now is particularly important to inform the future restoration of Cherry Springs Pond, which is currently scheduled to begin in FY29 and will support Measure AA Portfolio 24 (*MAA #24: Open Rancho de Guadalupe at Sierra Azul*). Cherry Springs Pond also provides an important linkage for WPT in the region supporting the

Highway 17 Wildlife Corridor Project (MAA #20), which includes WPT as a target species for the corridor linkage.

BUDGET / FISCAL IMPACT

The current fiscal year budget for project 80058 Districtwide Herpetofauna & Aquatic Habitat Assessment contains:

- ☐ sufficient funds.
- ☒ insufficient funds; the next quarterly budget update will include a reallocation of unspent funds from other budgets to cover for this expenditure.
- ☐ insufficient funds; approval of this item requires a fiscal year budget augmentation.
- ☐ future fiscal year budgets will include additional funds to complete the contracted work.

Measure AA

- ☒ No, this contract is not part of a Measure AA project.
- ☐ Yes, this contract is part of a Measure AA project.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND SELECTION

The District issued a Request for Proposals and Qualifications (RFPQ) on October 2, 2024 for the original project contract. The District received five proposals on November 10, 2024 and chose Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting based on their qualifications at a fair and reasonable price. Vollmar will sub-consult the WPT survey work with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The proposed fee provided by Vollmar is \$19,999.82 and includes hoop net installation, setting and checking baited traps, visual surveys, processing of turtles if captured, and data analysis. The proposed scope of work and cost aligns with similar turtle trapping work performed in previous years.

Staff determined that amending Vollmar's existing contract provides a streamlined approach to promptly confirming WPT presence and informing MAA-24 discussions, as the original scope provided a precursory survey.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION SUPPORTING THE PROJECT

The Board of Directors awarded Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting with the original contract for a Districtwide Survey and Assessment of Sensitive-Status Herpetofauna (Amphibians and Reptiles) Species on January 8, 2025 ([R-25-02](#), [Minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The proposed surveys to be provided by the consultant are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Article 19, Section 15306:

Section 15306 exempts basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, the General Manager will amend the contract with Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting to add the additional biological surveys for WPT at Cherry Springs Pond. Work is set to commence for 10 days in April or May 2026.

Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Department Manager

Contact person(s) and Prepared by:

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