



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-11-80
Meeting 11-25
September 14, 2011

AGENDA ITEM 6

AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract for Geotechnical Investigations and Pond Repair Design for Ponds DR07 and DR08 located at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve and Determination that the Recommended Actions are Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Determine that the recommended actions are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as set out in this report.
2. Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Fall Creek Engineering for an amount of \$39,965 plus a 10% contingency of \$4000, for a total amount not to exceed \$43,965 to complete Geotechnical Investigations, Pond Repair Design, and Construction oversight for Ponds DR07 and DR08 at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the Geotechnical Investigations and Pond Repair Design for Ponds DR07 and DR08 (Project) is to design a long-term pond repair that provides successful breeding habitat for the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) (CRLF), improves habitat for San Francisco garter snake (SFGS) and Western pond turtle (WPT), and provides continued water availability for cattle. Staff has determined that the geotechnical investigations, project design, and construction oversight will have no significant effect on the environment.

DISCUSSION

Background

Ponds DR07 and DR08 are located in the former Wool Ranch Area of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve), approximately three miles northwest of the Town of La Honda. The ponds are accessible from unpaved rural ranch roads departing from Sears Ranch Road via State Route 84 in the community of La Honda (refer to Attachment 1). The purpose of the Project is to design long-term pond repair that provides successful breeding habitat for the CRLF, improves potential habitat for SFGS, and improves water availability and access for cattle. The ponds currently have unrestricted cattle access, failing (or failed) earthen berms, non-functioning spillways, problems with sedimentation, invasive vegetation, and lack of sufficient ponding

duration. These factors limit successful breeding by CRLF each year. The long-term repair of Ponds DR07 and DR08 was identified as a high priority action item in the Wool Ranch Pond Management Plan prepared by Vollmar Consulting in 2009. The two ponds are located in the center of regionally significant habitat to a metapopulation (a population of populations) of CRLF. Management and maintenance of the ponds within this habitat is important to provide CRLF with the best possible chance for long-term success within the Preserve.

Consultant Selection

The proposal selection process commenced on August 12, 2011, a Request for Proposals and Qualifications (RFP/Q) was sent to three (3) consultants. Each consultant firm had previously submitted proposals to the District for similar projects and was identified as one of the most qualified firms for this type of work. A mandatory pre-proposal meeting was held on August 19, 2011, and was attended by the three (3) consultants. Proposals and sealed cost estimates were due on August 26, 2011 and three (3) proposals were received as shown below.

<i>Firm</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Base Bid</i>	<i>Percent Difference from proposed budget of \$40,000</i>
Butano Geotechnical Engineering	Freedom, CA	\$38,280	-4.3%
Fall Creek Engineering	Santa Cruz, CA	\$39,965	-0.1%
Haro, Kasunich and Associates, Inc.	Watsonville, CA	\$49,241	+23.1%

The highest-ranking proposal was submitted by Fall Creek Engineering. Staff examined each proposal submitted, reviewed prior work experience, and checked references of the top ranking consultant to verify that the consultant is a responsible, qualified professional with the skills, licenses, and experience necessary to complete the Project. Staff recommends award of contract to Fall Creek Engineering based upon their geotechnical and engineering expertise, completing similar projects for management and improvement of target species habitat, and experience with comparable projects in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Additional consultant selection factors include their site specific, cost effective project approach, ability to meet District insurance requirements, and responsiveness to the District's Request for Proposals. A 10% contingency has been included to address potential additional design work or for additional construction monitoring hours arising from unforeseen conditions.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY2011-12 budget includes \$48,500 to fund the geotechnical investigations, project design, and permitting for the Project. Award of this contract will leave \$4,535 remaining for project permitting. Staff estimates that permitting and CEQA fees may cost up to \$15,000. Due to these costs, staff will be returning to the Board at Midyear to request a \$10,000 augmentation to the Project budget to carry the project through design, CEQA, and permitting. To help offset the increased costs, the District was recently awarded \$20,000 in mitigation monies from San Jose Water Company to complete design and implementation of this important habitat improvement project. The FY2012-13 budget will include funds for bidding and construction. Staff anticipates construction costs to be \$75,000 – \$150,000, with total Project costs to be \$133,500 – \$208,500. District staff will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities for the construction phase of the Project.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Staff concludes that completing geotechnical investigations and project design for the Ponds DR07 and DR08 Repair project does not constitute a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because such services are categorically exempt from the CEQA as set out in this report

Staff concludes that geotechnical investigations and design services are categorically exempt under CEQA Guideline 15306 "Information Collection" which exempts an activity that "consists of 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." This project is also exempt under CEQA Guideline 15061 (b) (3) since there is no possibility that these activities will have a significant effect on the environment. No physical disturbance will result from these activities. Any future construction activities, if approved, will be subject to CEQA review prior to implementation.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board authorization, the General Manager will enter into a contract with Fall Creek Engineering to perform geotechnical investigations and project design for the Ponds DR07 and DR08 Repair project, which is scheduled for completion during winter of 2011/12. Project permitting will run concurrently with project implementation scheduled for late summer of 2012. Permitting review and coordination will involve the following regulatory agencies: United States Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and San Mateo County.

Attachments

1. Vicinity and Site Map, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, Ponds DR07 and DR08

Prepared by:

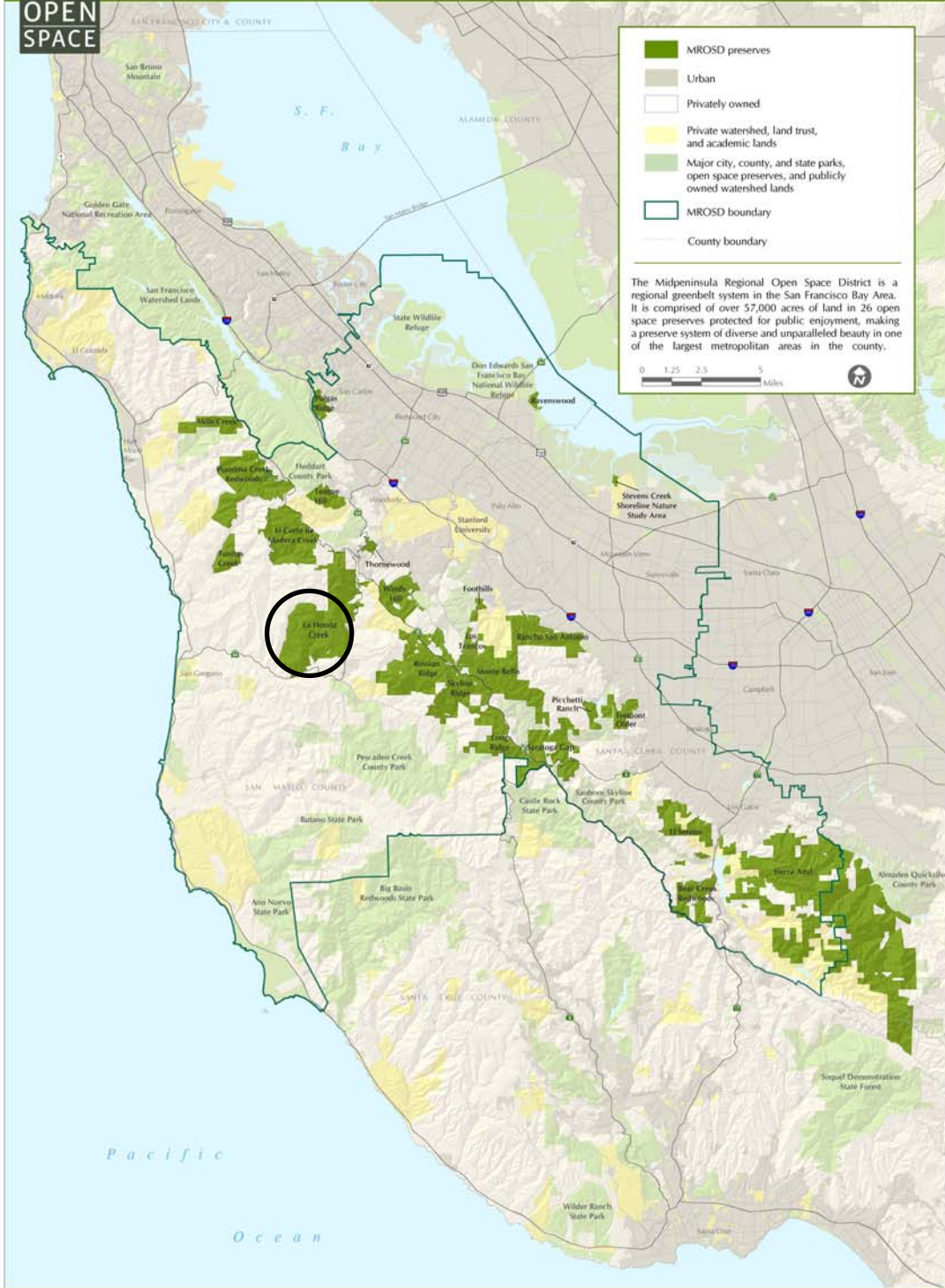
Julie Andersen, Resource Planner

Contact person:

Same as above

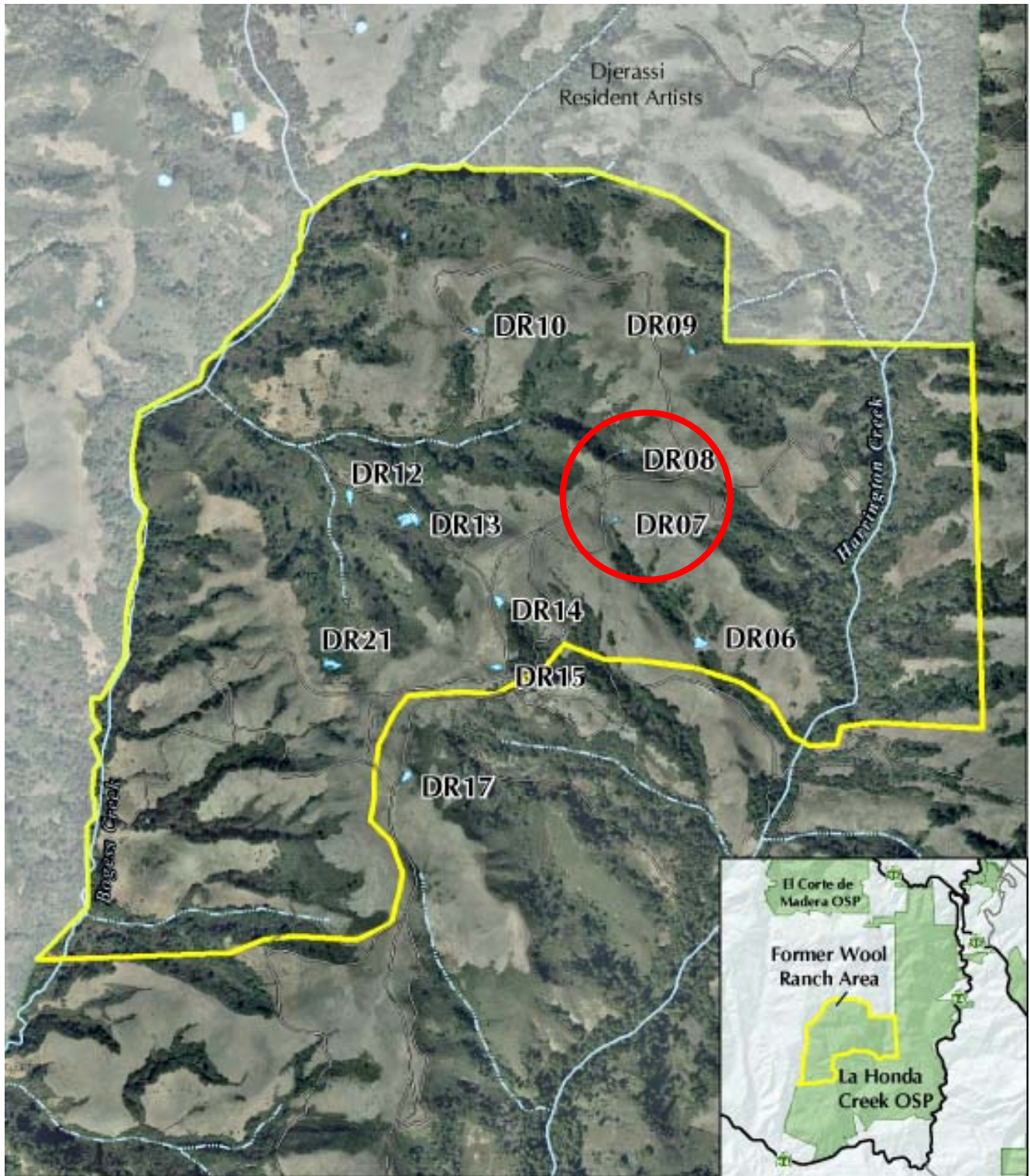


Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Preserves and Surrounding Lands



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General Project Area La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve



Ponds DR07 and DR08 Vicinity Map