



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-14-48  
Meeting 14-09  
March 26, 2014

## AGENDA ITEM 6

### AGENDA ITEM

Agreement to Manage Slender False Brome on Private Properties near District Preserves

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G.M.", is written over the end of the "GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION" heading.

Authorize the General Manager to:

1. Approve a cooperative agreement with the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District for a total of \$100,350 in Fiscal Year 2014-15 to treat slender false brome on private properties near District preserves.
2. Exercise the option to extend the agreement for a second and third year if the program is successful for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$311,866 over the three-year term.

### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) has a program to manage slender false brome (SFB) in San Mateo County to protect native redwood forests on its preserves and adjacent private lands. This cooperative agreement would transfer the coordination with preserve neighbors to manage slender false brome on their property from contingent District staff to the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (RCD) for a three-year period.

### DISCUSSION

Slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*) is a non-native, invasive grass that is becoming established in the redwood forests of San Mateo County and has the potential to alter the natural resources and fire risk of these native forests.

On December 14, 2005 (see R-05-122), the District Board of Directors approved a ten-year plan to eradicate SFB from Thornewood Open Space Preserve and the surrounding Woodside neighborhoods. Progress has been made on controlling SFB on District preserves and surrounding private properties. However, increased efforts at detection have made it obvious that SFB is more widespread throughout San Mateo County than originally thought. In 2009, the total net area of land infested with SFB was estimated to be 100 acres (40 acres of District land and 60 acres of adjacent private lands). Since 2009, slender false brome has been treated on approximately 185 acres of private property (92 property owners).

Previously, the District's SFB Program was managed primarily by a part-time contingent employee with the assistance of a part-time intern. At this time the District's SFB program has reached maximum capacity for the number of acres that can be effectively administered in one

season with the current staffing allocation. The part-time contingent position is currently vacant. Savings from this position will be applied to the RCD contract if approved by the Board.

Recently, the RCD offered to partner with the District in managing the control of SFB on private property and they are well-qualified to assist the District in this type of work. The RCD is a non-regulatory special district that works directly with private property owners to protect, conserve, and restore natural resources through information, education, and technical assistance programs. Their staff has experience surveying for invasive plants, GIS mapping, community outreach, and funding the installation of resource protection projects on private properties. Last year, the RCD successfully obtained and implemented a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to map the recently discovered population of SFB along La Honda Creek.

This three-year cooperative agreement would fund the RCD in managing the control of SFB on private properties in San Mateo County. In the first year, the amount of private property acres to be treated is expected to be approximately 100 acres and to occur on the approximately 90 private properties in the Woodside area currently in the slender false brome management program as developed by the District. Year Two and Year Three of this agreement are optional and contingent on both parties determining the pilot year is successful. In Year Two and Year Three, the treatment acres are expected to increase by approximately ten percent. The RCD would be responsible for communicating with the private property owners, surveying their properties, treating slender false brome therein, post-treatment surveys, and submitting progress reports to the District. The District will continue to fund treatment of slender false brome on properties near District preserves. The RCD may apply for and receive grant funds for treatment of slender false brome at other locations in San Mateo County that are not near District preserves.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed FY2014-15 budget scheduled for adoption on March 26, 2014 includes funds in the amount of \$100,350 for the first year of managing slender false brome on private properties. Should this agreement be extended for years two and three, funding would be included as part of the proposed annual budgets for consideration by the Board of Directors.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW**

No committee review required.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE**

The treatment of SFB is covered by the District's January 2013 Slender False Brome – Amended Integrated Pest Management Program, Subsequent Initial Study and Negative Declaration. The RCD will follow all conditions set out by that environmental review and also any new provisions subsequently developed under the District's Integrated Pest Management Program which is expected to be finalized in 2014.

**NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the General Manager will be authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with the RCD to manage slender false brome on private properties in the Woodside area.

Responsible Department Head:  
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