SEEDS Funding Program

Service-learning for Ecological Education and District Stewardship

Pre-Submittal Conference

October 19, 2026

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Natural Resources Department

Shared stewardship through service + learning

Today’s purpose

Leave with a clear sense of fit, process, and next steps.

1

Program intent

Why Midpen is creating these partnerships

2

Service-Learning

How the term is used in this RFQ and subsequent RFP

3

Call for Partners → Funding Application

What is evaluated now versus later

4

Partner role

Services, staffing, and resource protection

5

SOQ expectations

What a responsive qualification package should demonstrate

6

Questions

Key dates, formal question process, and discussion

Goal: help you determine whether this opportunity is a good fit — and prepare a responsive Statement of Qualifications.

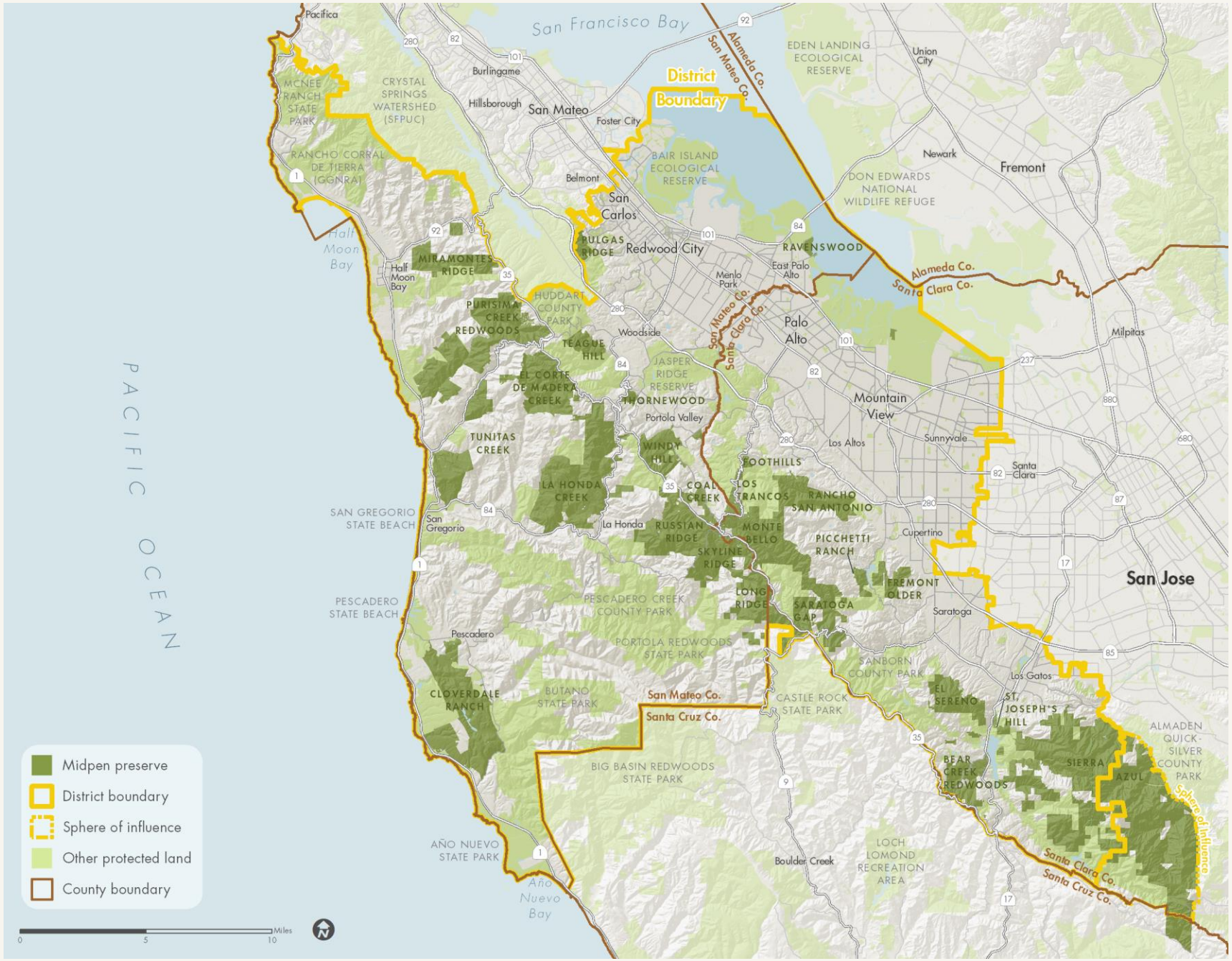
Some Midpen Facts

- Public agency, created in 1972 by a grassroots voter initiative
- 763,000 constituents (2020)
- Elected board: seven directors
- Funded primarily through property tax
- 27 Preserves in Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties
- Preserved over 72,000 acres, 250+ miles of trails
- Preserves are free and open to the public
- Main office in Los Altos + field offices
- 240 employees, ~1000 volunteers
- $300 million voter-approved general obligation bond passed in 2014 to support public priorities









Midpen's Lands

Service-Learning Resource Management Partnerships

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Midpen's Missions

- *Midpen's mission: to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.*

- *On the Coast, Midpen has an expanded mission to acquire and preserve agricultural land of regional significance, preserve rural character and encourage viable agricultural uses of land resources.*





Why this program?

Volunteer service is already central to District resource management.

~40%

of District Integrated Pest Management work is completed by volunteers

The partnership program is designed to expand the organization, leadership, education, and supervision that make that stewardship possible.

More stewardship capacity

Help accomplish invasive plant management, restoration, and other natural resource work at meaningful scale.

More meaningful participation

Create field experiences where community members contribute direct service while understanding the ecological purpose of the work.

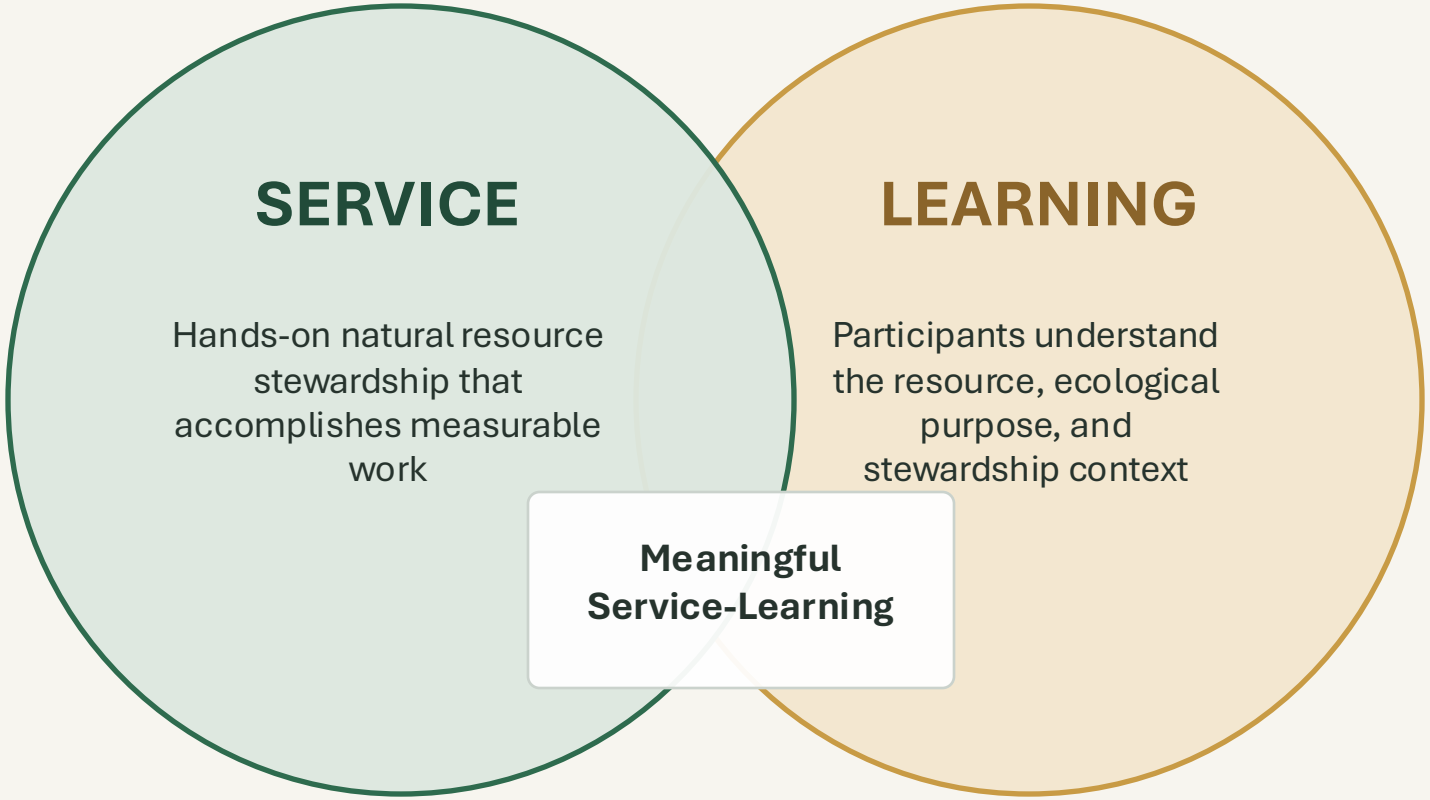
Shared ecological stewardship

Build sustained partnerships in which the District, participating organizations, and communities contribute complementary skills and service.

RFQ pp. 1–2

What we mean by “Service-Learning”

Direct stewardship service and meaningful learning happen together.



Not primarily a classroom program

Learning should be connected to the field work participants are doing.

Not a paid field-crew contract

The future agreements are intended to procure leadership, education, and supervision that generate volunteer service.

RFQ pp. 2, 7

Who can participate?

Compensation from another program does not automatically make someone ineligible.

- **Traditional volunteers**
- **Students**
- **Interns**
- **Conservation corps members**
- **Stipended / award participants**
- **Paid Service-Learning participants**

The key question is the participant's primary role: hands-on stewardship + associated learning led by the participating organization.

RFQ p. 2

A two-step selection process

Qualification first. Project proposals and pricing come later.

STEP 1

Call for Partners

Who is qualified to partner with us?

Evaluates qualifications, experience, staffing, Service-Learning approach, and organizational capacity.

Cost, Year 1 commitments, and proposed budgets are not evaluated here.

STEP 2

Partnership Planning

How can we partner— and where?

Qualified organizations may be contacted to explore site-specific programing options via Partnership Planning meetings.

Programming, service levels, events, participants, outcomes, staffing, and pricing are developed in here.

Scores from the Call for Partners do not carry forward into the Partnership Planning phase

RFQ pp. 1, 3–4, 13

Anticipated program scale

Designed for multiple partners, different strengths, and variable annual needs.

$1.9 – $3M

anticipated total program budget

over 4 years

Supports annual planning, event delivery, education, monitoring where provided, recruitment / administration where applicable, and other authorized costs.

One or more partners

The District expects to select multiple organizations, when that best meets program needs.

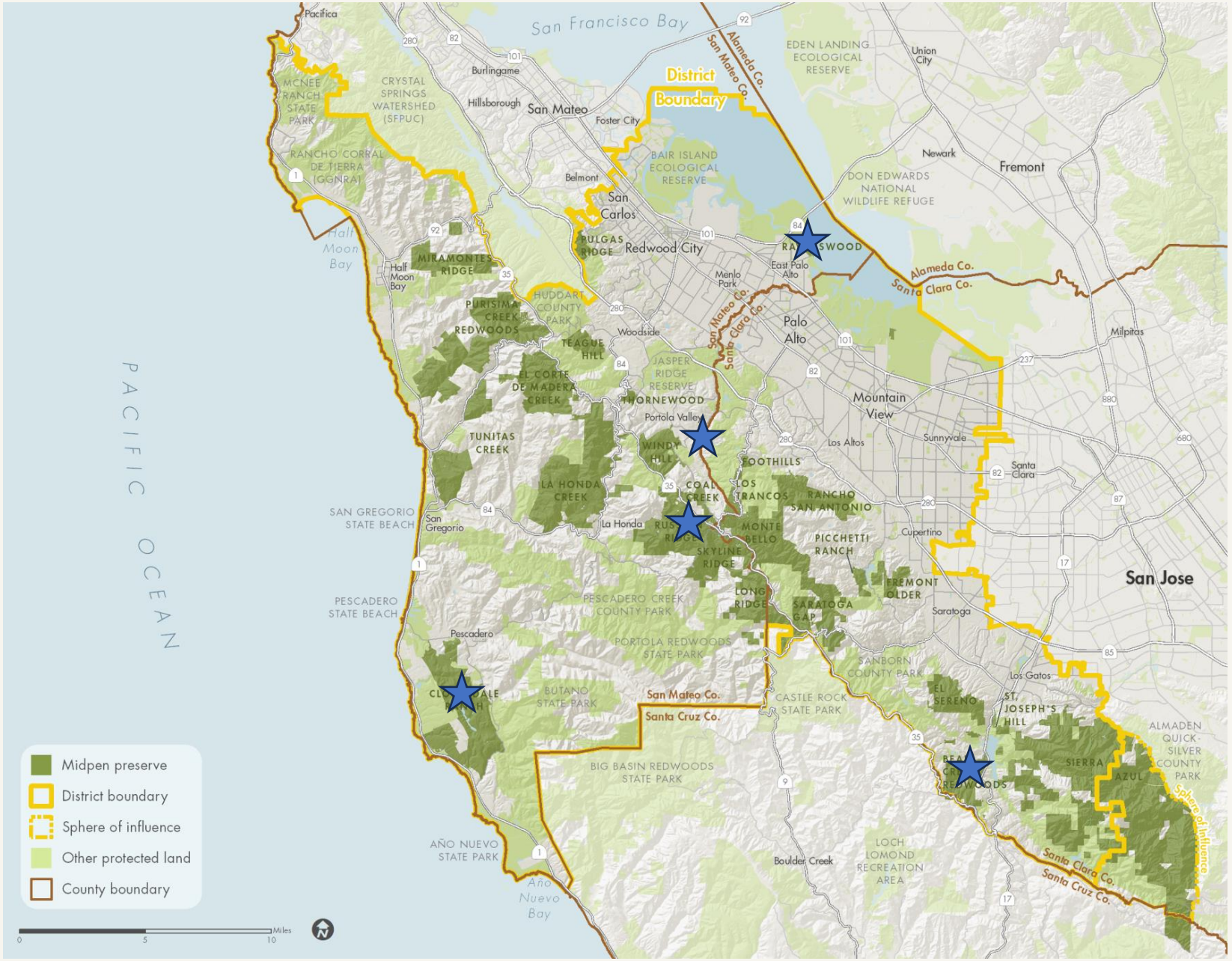
No Districtwide requirement

An organization does not need to provide every service or cover every geographic area to qualify.

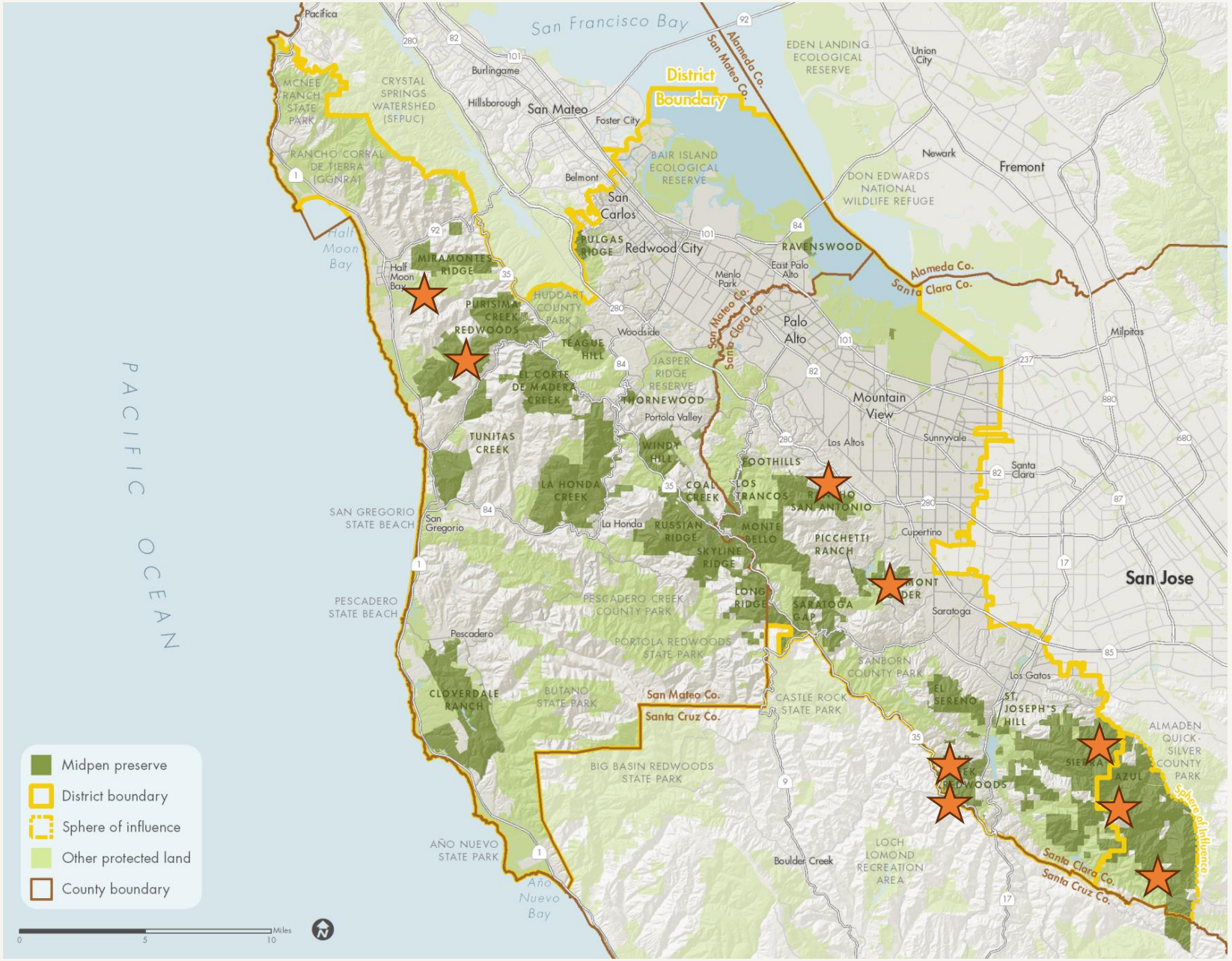
Scale may vary

Projects, event levels, funding, and annual allocations may change with priorities, site conditions, partner capacity, and available funding.

RFQ p. 3 and p. 11



Planning information only. Projects, schedules, funding, and work levels are subject to change based on District priorities, environmental review, site conditions, available funding, and partner capacity.



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What might Service-Learning participants do?

Manual invasive plant removal is expected to be the most common activity.

1 **Manual invasive plant removal**

Most anticipated events

2 **Native plant installation**

Planting restoration areas

3 **Native seeding**

Supporting revegetation

4 **Native seed / material collection**

When authorized and appropriate

5 **Watering + establishment**

Supporting young plantings

6 **Restoration site maintenance**

Ongoing hands-on stewardship

Organizations may also identify other hands-on stewardship activities for which they have relevant qualifications.

RFQ pp. 2, 6

What would a partner actually provide?

The partner's core contribution is the capacity to turn District priorities into well-run Service-Learning events.

PLAN

Annual work planning, site visits, project scoping, event capacity, logistics, resource protection needs, and cost estimates.

LEAD

Orientation, work demonstrations, field supervision, safety oversight, work quality control, and District coordination.

TEACH

Connect the stewardship activity to relevant ecology, restoration, biodiversity, watersheds, resilience, or natural history.

SUPPORT

Recruitment / registration where applicable, participant communications, reporting, and biological monitoring when qualified staff are provided.

Annual work planning and project scoping after agreement execution is a compensable service.

RFQ pp. 5–7

Resource protection & biological monitoring

High standards are required — but organizations do not need their own biological monitor to qualify.

All work will be District-authorized

- Authorized areas, methods, and project-specific requirements
- Sensitive plants and wildlife; non-target vegetation
- Cultural resources, wetlands, waterways, and seasonal restrictions
- Partner-provided tools, equipment, and PPE
- Phytosanitary cleaning and sanitation requirements

BIOLOGICAL MONITORING

A District-qualified Level 1 monitor is required whenever authorized activities are occurring on District lands.

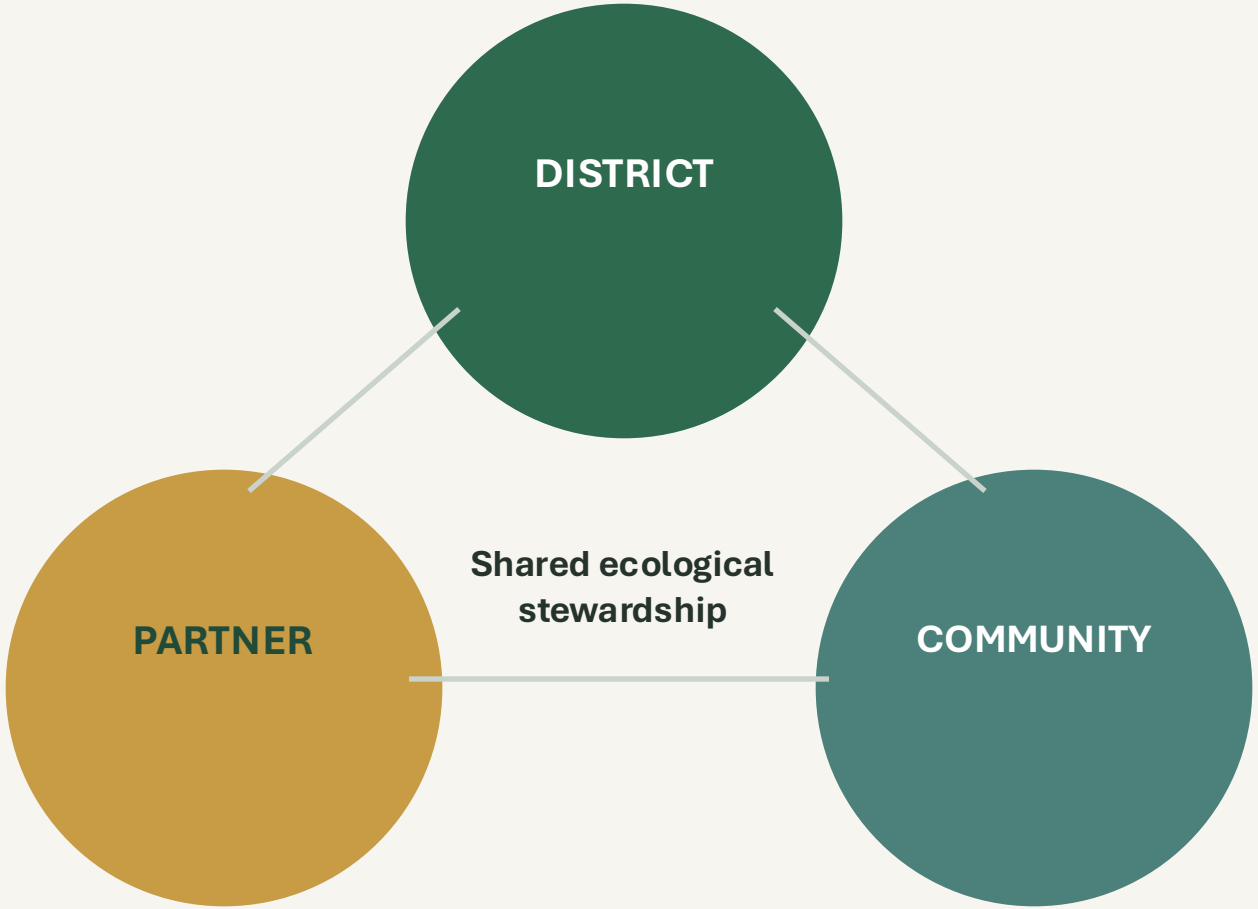
You may provide qualified staff — but you do not have to.

District can provide monitoring

RFQ pp. 6–7

Shared stewardship — not just a contract

The District is seeking partnerships with complementary contributions and mutual benefit.



Compensation

Future agreements compensate authorized services.

Learning + access

Potential trainings, field experiences, and engagement with District specialists.

Recognition

Potential communications and social-media recognition for partnership work.

Partnership opportunities are subject to District approval and availability.

RFQ pp. 7–8

What we need from you now

Demonstrate capability and fit — do not design the entire four-year program yet.

01

Organization + mission alignment

02

Service-Learning + volunteer leadership

03

Natural resource management experience

04

Education approach

05

Community engagement + accessibility

06

Staffing, safety + capacity

07

Biological monitoring qualifications

08

Relevant projects + references

SOQ limit: 12 pages, excluding the 1-page cover letter, résumés, and specifically requested attachments.

RFQ pp. 8–12

How the Call for Partners will be evaluated

Qualification is threshold-based, not a final competitive ranking.



ALL minimum qualifications required

TOTAL score of at least 70 / 100

RFQ pp. 12–13

What comes next: SEEDS Partnership Planning Meetings

This is where qualified organizations shape specific programs around project opportunities and available budgets.

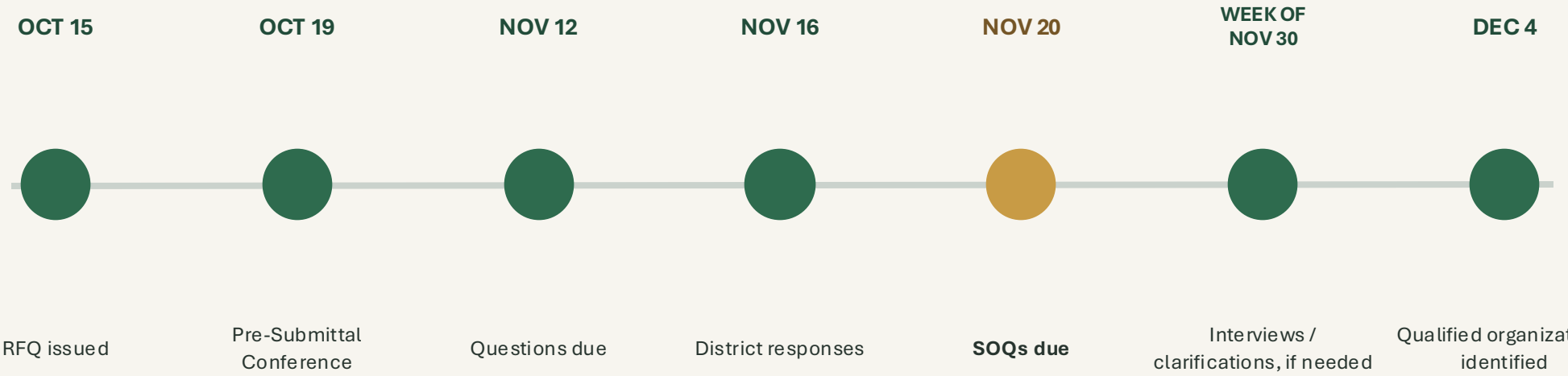
WHERE	Projects or geographic areas
WHAT	Service-Learning program + activities
HOW MUCH	Four-year budget + annual allocation
HOW MANY	Events, participants + volunteer service hours
WHAT RESULT	Resource management accomplishments
WHO	Staffing, monitoring + recruitment / administration
VALUE	Overall service contribution to the District

Only organizations qualified through the Call for Partners are eligible.

RFQ pp. 3–4, 14

Schedule & next steps

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.



Questions: sreinhart@openspace.org • SOQ deadline: November 20, 2026 • Electronic submission only

RFQ pp. 13–14

Questions & discussion

Good topics for today

- Is our organization a good fit?
- What counts as Service-Learning?
- What participant models are eligible?
- What staffing or monitoring is expected?

Formal RFQ questions

sreinhart@openspace.org

Substantive answers will be distributed to interested organizations.

Thank you

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District