



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-24-04
Meeting 24-01
January 10, 2024

AGENDA ITEM 5

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Award of Contract to Blankinship & Associates for Technical Literature Review Services

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION *den*

Award a contract to Blankinship & Associates of Davis, California, for a not-to-exceed base contract amount of \$75,000 over four years to provide scientific and technical literature review services to inform updates to the Integrated Pest Management Program.

SUMMARY

The General Manager recommends awarding a contract to Blankinship & Associates (Blankinship) to provide services for technical literature review services in connection with the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program for a base contract amount of \$75,000 over four years. The scope under the recommended contract will provide an annual scientific and technical review of the District's approved pesticide list and recommendations to update the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program. There are sufficient funds in the adopted Fiscal Year 2023--24 (FY24) budget to cover the recommended action and expenditures through the end of the fiscal year. Funding for future years' budgets will be requested as part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

DISCUSSION

Land management activities and the associated sciences are complex and nuanced. A third-party review of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (District) vegetation management practices is paramount to ensure minimal impacts to the region's ecology (e.g., biodiversity, water quality, soil health) and ongoing protection of human health and safety. As the science of land management matures over time and new understandings of both positive and negative impacts come to light, the District remains committed to commissioning a holistic and balanced review of new and emerging research findings. This annual review weighs the validity of the science and the academic journal's prestige and ranking into account to inform recommended updates to the District's IPM Program.

Due to the size and economic importance of the agricultural sector, most pest control and pesticide research focuses on the impacts and efficacy of methods used in agriculture and not in natural areas. This requires a reviewer to differentiate and use their best professional judgment on how the research translates from agricultural to natural area use.

Consultant Selection

On September 13, 2023, the District released a Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFQP) on Periscope. Two firms known to the District to hold a valid Pest Control Advisor license with expertise in land management for natural resources were informed of the RFQP. The District received one proposal on October 18, 2023. The District's proposal evaluation committee reviewed Blankinship & Associates' proposal. The committee deemed the firm as highly qualified, with their proposal at a fair and reasonable price, and therefore suited for the project based on their response to the RFQP.

Consultant	Location	Proposed Fee
Blankinship & Associates	Davis, CA	\$75,000

Blankinship & Associates

Blankinship & Associates is highly qualified to perform this technical review. Their team includes licensed Pest Control Advisors, biologists, environmental toxicologists, and a UC Cooperative Extension Weed Science Farm Advisor (Emeritus). In addition, the project manager led the preparation of the addendum to the District's IPM Program in 2019 and, as a result, is familiar with the District's policies, BMPs, and special status species.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is sufficient funding in the FY24 adopted budget to cover the cost of the recommendation. Funds for future years will be recommended in future fiscal year budgets as a part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

On February 27, 2019, the Board adopted a resolution approving an addendum to the certified Final Environmental Impact Report for the IPM Program and related minor project modifications ([R-19-11](#), [Minutes](#)). One project modification was the inclusion of Best Management Practice #36:

Annual Pesticide Literature Review - To inform updates to the IPM Program, the District shall conduct an annual pesticide literature review of all newly published toxicological research and court proceedings related to pesticides on the "Approved Pesticide List."

At the same meeting, staff provided an informational memorandum on an award of contract for a literature review on the use of pesticides in the IPM Program.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

An award of a contract for a literature review is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board authorization, the General Manager will execute a contract with Blankenship & Associates to provide a literature review for the IPM Program over the next four years. The literature reviews will be posted on the District website as they are finalized and shared with the Board at the annual comprehensive vegetation management report. In addition, the findings of the literature review will be used to inform proposed new updates to the IPM Program, which will be presented to the Board for approval in the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2025.

Responsible Department Head:

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