



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-24-39
Meeting 24-08
March 27, 2024

AGENDA ITEM 7

AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract for Botanical Survey Services at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., of Oakland, California to provide botanical survey services to inform future actions in support of the Conservation Grazing Program for a base amount not to exceed \$90,144.
2. Authorize a 15% contingency of \$13,522 to cover unforeseen issues, for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$103,666.

SUMMARY

In January 2024, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) solicited three proposals for botanical survey services at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (Preserve). Based on the proposals received, the General Manager recommends awarding a contract to AECOM Technical Services, Inc., (AECOM) for a base amount not to exceed \$90,144 and authorizing a 15% contingency amount of \$13,522, for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$103,666. There are sufficient funds in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 (FY24) budget to cover the recommended action and expenditures through the end of the fiscal year. Funds to continue the second year of contract work would be proposed as part of the FY25 annual budget and action plan process.

BACKGROUND

The conservation of special-status native plants and their habitats, as well as sensitive natural communities, is integral to maintaining biological diversity. Protocol botanical surveys ensure a consistent and systematic approach for surveying, locating, assessing, and mapping special status plants and sensitive natural communities to protect and steward these land resources properly. This work is also critical to ensure that future projects are properly designed to avoid and/or reduce impacts to these resources.

The recommended contract would provide the necessary botanical survey services for future Conservation Grazing Program projects at the Preserve, including:

- Installation of water infrastructure
- Targeted treatment of scrub encroachment into priority grasslands

- Construction of new perimeter and cross-fencing to improve the grazing distribution
- Expansion of conservation grazing into new areas

DISCUSSION

The Natural Resources Department issued a Request for Proposals and Qualifications (RFPQ) in 2022 to develop a broad list of qualified biological services consultants for various on-call services, including botanical surveys. A total of 24 firms were determined to be qualified, and the District has entered into various contracts with prequalified firms beginning in 2022. For this project, three prequalified firms specializing in botanical surveys were solicited for proposals in January 2024. The requirements for this project included the following, which are consistent with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) guidelines for botanical surveys:

- Knowledge of plant taxonomy and natural community ecology;
- Familiarity with the plants of the area, including special status species;
- Familiarity with natural communities of the area, including special status natural communities;
- Experience conducting floristic field surveys or experience with floristic surveys conducted under the direction of an experienced surveyor;
- Familiarity with appropriate state and federal statutes related to plants and plant collecting; and
- Experience with analyzing impacts of development on native plant species and natural communities.

The following proposals were received and evaluated.

Firm	Location	Proposed Fees (over 2 years)
AECOM Technical Services, Inc.	Oakland, CA	\$90,144
BioMaAS, Inc./Avila & Associates	San Francisco, CA	\$129,852

After carefully reviewing all proposals, AECOM was deemed the most qualified and best suited for the project at a fair and reasonable price. AECOM's Project Manager and Senior Botanist bring 15 years of experience in rare plant surveys within the District's region.

The base contract includes three rounds of botanical surveys (as required by CDFW) and a final botanical survey report.

Botanical field surveys are conducted in the field at the times of year when plants will be both evident and identifiable. Usually, this is during flowering or fruiting. The timing and number of visits necessary to determine if special status plants are present are determined by geographic location, the natural communities present, and the weather patterns of the year(s) in which botanical field surveys are conducted. Of the 1,205 acres to be surveyed, over 35% (~440 acres) is classified as difficult terrain and roughly 55% (~660 acres) as thick vegetation. This may result in survey delays. A 15% contingency is requested due to the complex nature and extent of the project, which will span multiple years.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is sufficient funding in the FY24 budget to cover the cost of the recommendation. Funds for future year costs 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 November 10, 2010, the Board adopted an Amendment to the Preliminary Use and Management Plan for the Lobitos Ridge and Elkus Ranch Uplands additions to Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve to incorporate a Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) for the Lobitos Ridge/Elkus Ranch Grazing Unit ([R-10-99](#), [Minutes](#)). This proposed contract would support the implementation of actions in the RMP.

On October 28, 2020, the Board adopted a Preliminary Use and Management Plan for the South Cowell partial purchase as an addition to Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, with direction for staff to prepare an amendment to the Lobitos/Elkus Rangeland Management Plan (RMP) to incorporate the new property addition into the existing Grazing Unit ([R-20-122](#), [Minutes](#)). Staff completed the amendment and will bring it to the Board for approval in the Spring of 2025. This proposed contract would support the implementation of actions in the amended RMP.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Award of this contract is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. Additionally, the proposed botanical surveys 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

Following Board approval, the General Manager will execute a contract with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., for a two-year period beginning in FY24.

Attachment

1. Map: Biological Study Area

Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources

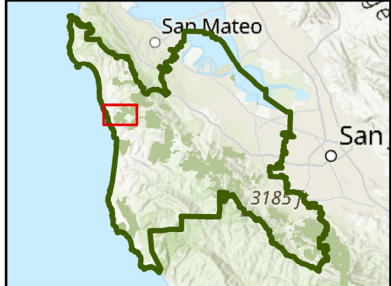
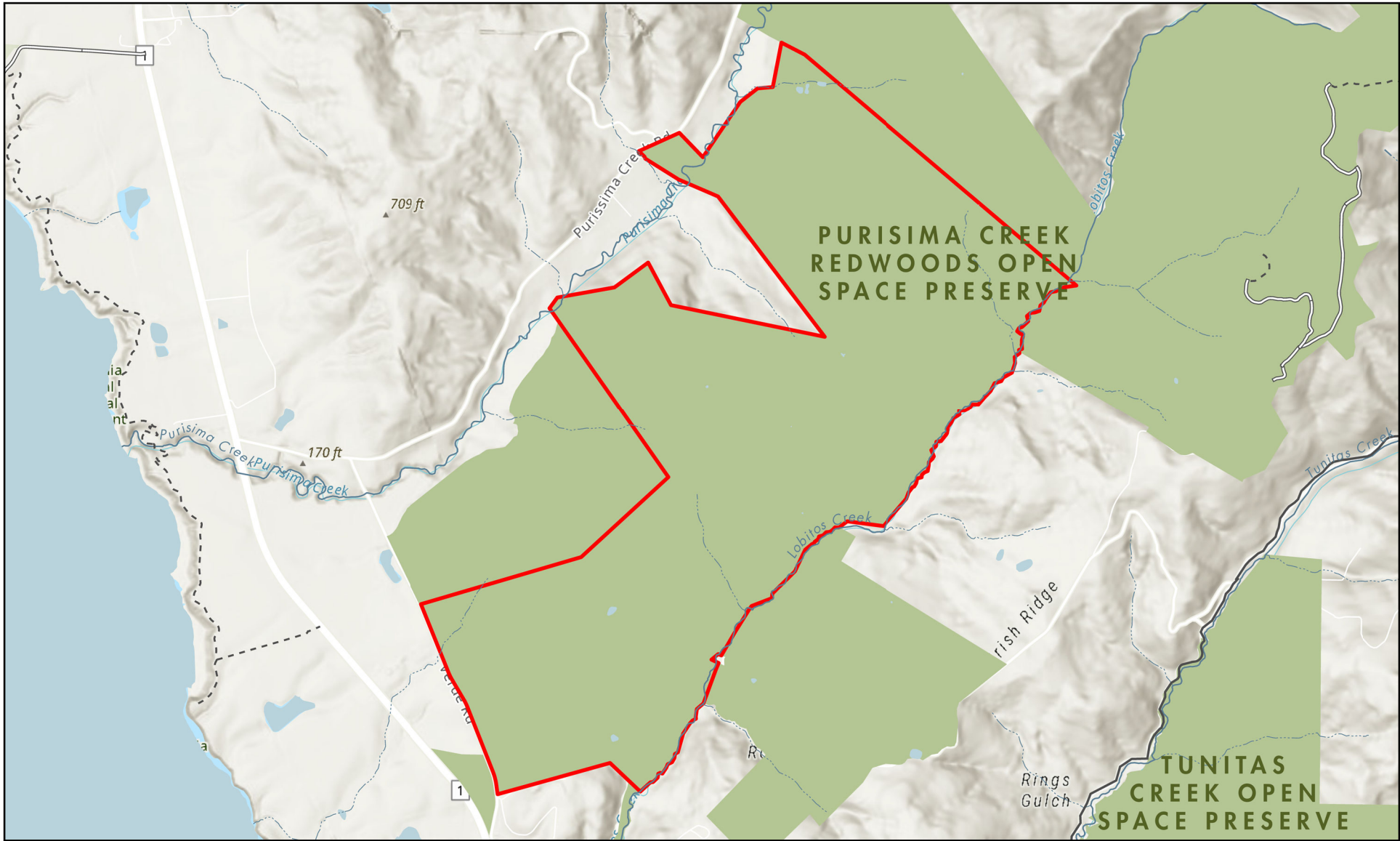
Brandon Stewart, Land and Facilities

Prepared by (including graphics):

Coty Sifuentes-Winter, Senior Resource Management Specialist, Natural Resources

Contact person:

Matthew Shapero, Resource Management Specialist III, Land & Facilities



Attachment 1: Biological Study Area

California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS, California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USFWS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri, CGIAR, USGS

2024

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane California III FIPS 0403 Feet

