



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

R-19-84  
Meeting 19-17  
June 26, 2019

## AGENDA ITEM 11

### AGENDA ITEM

Award of Contract for Forest Inventory and Management Planning, La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

### GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Authorize the General Manager to enter into contract with Sicular Environmental Consulting and Natural Lands Management of Berkeley, California for \$79,993.
2. Authorize a 15% contingency of \$12,000 to be expended only if necessary to cover unanticipated conditions or needs, for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$91,993.

### SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) owns approximately 30,000 acres of forest and woodland habitat. The District's Forest Management Policy directs staff to inventory and assess District forests to document existing conditions, initiate long-term forest monitoring, and make recommendations for forest management actions to achieve District preservation, restoration, and fire resiliency goals. A 1,300 acre forested portion of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve) is the subject area for the District's first forest assessment and management plan. A map of the project area is included (Attachment 1). For the purpose of this study, the project area is referred to as the La Honda Forest. The General Manager recommends entering into a contract with Sicular Environmental Consulting and Natural Lands Management (Sicular) to provide forest assessment and planning services for the La Honda Forest for a not-to-exceed contract amount of \$79,993 and authorizing a 15% contingency amount of \$12,000. There are sufficient funds in the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 budget to fund this scope of services, excluding the contingency. If the use of the contingency is necessary, a budget amendment will be proposed using savings from other projects or activities.

### DISCUSSION

The District's landholdings include a total of approximately 30,000 acres of forest and woodland habitat. Much of this forest and woodland habitat was altered by historical land use practices, including timber and fuelwood harvesting, agricultural uses, residential development, and fire suppression activities. Active management within District forest habitat has typically been limited to road and trail maintenance, invasive plant species management, and limited fuel management projects primarily around structures and public roads.

The District's Resource Management Policies (RMP) include Forest Management Policies with the following goals: "to retain and promote biologically diverse, dynamic forest conditions;

maintain and enhance high quality forest and aquatic habitat; encourage and enhance the development of late-seral conifer forest; provide for visitor experiences within diverse forest habitat; and promote regional fire management objectives”.

The Forest Management Policies were developed in 2007 and included two public study sessions with the Board of Directors (Board) (R-07-76, R-07-78). The Board approved the final Forest Management Policies as part of the RMP in 2011 (R-12-05). California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for the RMP (Mitigated Negative Declaration) was adopted by the Board at the same meeting. RMP are followed during the Use and Management Plan and Master Plan process for each preserve.

The La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan (Master Plan), Mitigated Negative Declaration, and Mitigation Monitoring Program were adopted by the Board in 2012 (R-12-83). The Master Plan includes a Forest Management Element, which directs District forest management efforts to begin with surveys to document existing conditions to inform potential future management decisions. The Master Plan also identifies opportunities to manage redwood forest habitats in the preserve to accelerate the development of late-seral conditions, with the goal of protecting and restoring old, mature, forest habitat for wildlife, fire resiliency, and to increase carbon uptake and storage. A portion of the Preserve within the study area is designated in the Master Plan as a Conservation Management Unit (CMU) due to an intensive timber harvest history. Many of the former dirt logging roads are in poor condition and will be evaluated for restoration as a component of this work to reduce erosion and sediment delivery to adjacent creeks. Forest management in the CMU area would not conflict with recreational access since this area is closed to the public.

The 1,300 acre La Honda Forest will be the District’s first forest assessment and management plan (La Honda Forest Plan). This location offers a variety of forest habitats and conditions, watershed/ habitat restoration opportunities, and the potential to improve forest resilience to fire. The La Honda Forest Plan will also benefit from the substantial resource and preserve data gathered to support the 2012 Master Plan. The three main components of this project are: 1) assess all forest types within the study area, 2) assess old logging roads in the CMU within the project area, and 3) develop a suite of forest management recommendations for future Board consideration.

### Consultant Selection

A Request for Proposals & Qualifications (RFPQ) was issued on April 18, 2019 on the District’s website, BidSync, and directly emailed to 22 forest management professionals, educational institutions, and agencies. Staff received three proposals by the May 20, 2019 RFPQ deadline.

Based on a thorough evaluation, Sicular Environmental Consulting and Natural Lands Management (Sicular) was deemed the most qualified, given their project team’s diverse field knowledge, prior experience with other similar projects, and well designed and justified forest assessment methodology. Sicular demonstrated a deep knowledge of the project’s background, setting, deliverables and goals, and submitted a high quality proposal to perform the scope of work at a fair and reasonable price. For these reasons, the General Manager recommends entering into an agreement with Sicular to complete the La Honda Forest Assessment and Management Planning Project.

The Sicular project team consists of experts in the following fields: conservation planning, geography, forestry, forest inventory statistics, academic restoration forestry, engineering geology, hydrology, and geographic information systems.

Examples of relevant projects completed by Sicular include:

- San Vicente Redwoods Conservation Plan and San Vicente Redwoods Management Plan for Sempervirens Fund, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Save the Redwoods League and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.
- Sempervirens 236 Southern Conifer Flats Old Growth Restoration Project for Sempervirens Fund
- Pescadero-Butano Watershed Assessment and Stewardship Plan for National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
- Data Archiving and Climate Change Experiments at Coram Experimental Forest for the USDA Rocky Mountain Research Station
- Lick Creek Demonstration-Research Forest: 25-Year Fire and Cutting Effects on Vegetation and Fuels for USDI Joint Fire Science Program
- Garcia River Forest Monitoring Program for the Nature Conservancy
- Panoramic Hill Fire Hazard Mitigation for UC Berkeley.
- Santa Cruz Mountains Forest Carbon Feasibility Study for Sempervirens Fund

## FISCAL IMPACT

The FY2019-20 budget includes \$80,000 for the Restoration Forestry Demonstration Project #VP15-002. There are sufficient funds in the project budget to cover the recommended action and expenditures, excluding the 15% contingency. If the use of the contingency is necessary, a budget amendment will be proposed using savings from other projects or activities.

<b>Restoration Forestry Demonstration Project VP15-002</b>	<b>FY2019-20 Projected</b>	<b>FY2020-21 Projected</b>	<b>Estimated Future Years</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>VP15-002 Budget:</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$320,000</b>
Spent-to-Date (as of 05/23/2019):	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Encumbrances:	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Sicular Award of Contract:	(\$79,993)	\$0	\$0	<b>(\$79,993)</b>
<b>Budget Remaining (Proposed):</b>	<b>\$7</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$240,007</b>

The recommended action is not funded by Measure AA.

## BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

The Forest Management Policies were developed in 2007 and included two public study sessions with the Board (R-07-76, R-07-78), with final Board approval 2011 (R-12-05). The La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan (Master Plan) was adopted by the Board in 2012 (R-12-83).

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Additional public notice was sent to individuals on the La Honda interested parties list.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE**

This item is not a project subject to CEQA. The RMP, including the Forest Management Policy, received review per CEQA as did the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan. This project is consistent with assessment and management planning actions recommended in these prior CEQA project reviews. Additional CEQA review for specific actions recommended in the La Honda Forest Plan, if warranted, would be conducted prior to project implementation.

**NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval by the Board, the General Manager will enter into a contract agreement with Sicular to complete the forest and road assessments, and to prepare the La Honda Forest Plan (Q1, FY 2020). Upon completion of the draft La Honda Forest Plan, the consultant and staff will present the draft Forest Plan, including opportunities and recommendations for management, to the Board at a public study session (Q4, FY 2020). The draft plan will be revised based upon comments by the Board, and public comments will be addressed. The final La Honda Forest Plan will return to the Board at a regular public Board Meeting for final action (Q1, FY 2021). Following approval, specific forest management projects will be identified and brought to the Board during the budget preparation process in future years.

## Attachment

1. Project area map

## Responsible Department Head:

Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager

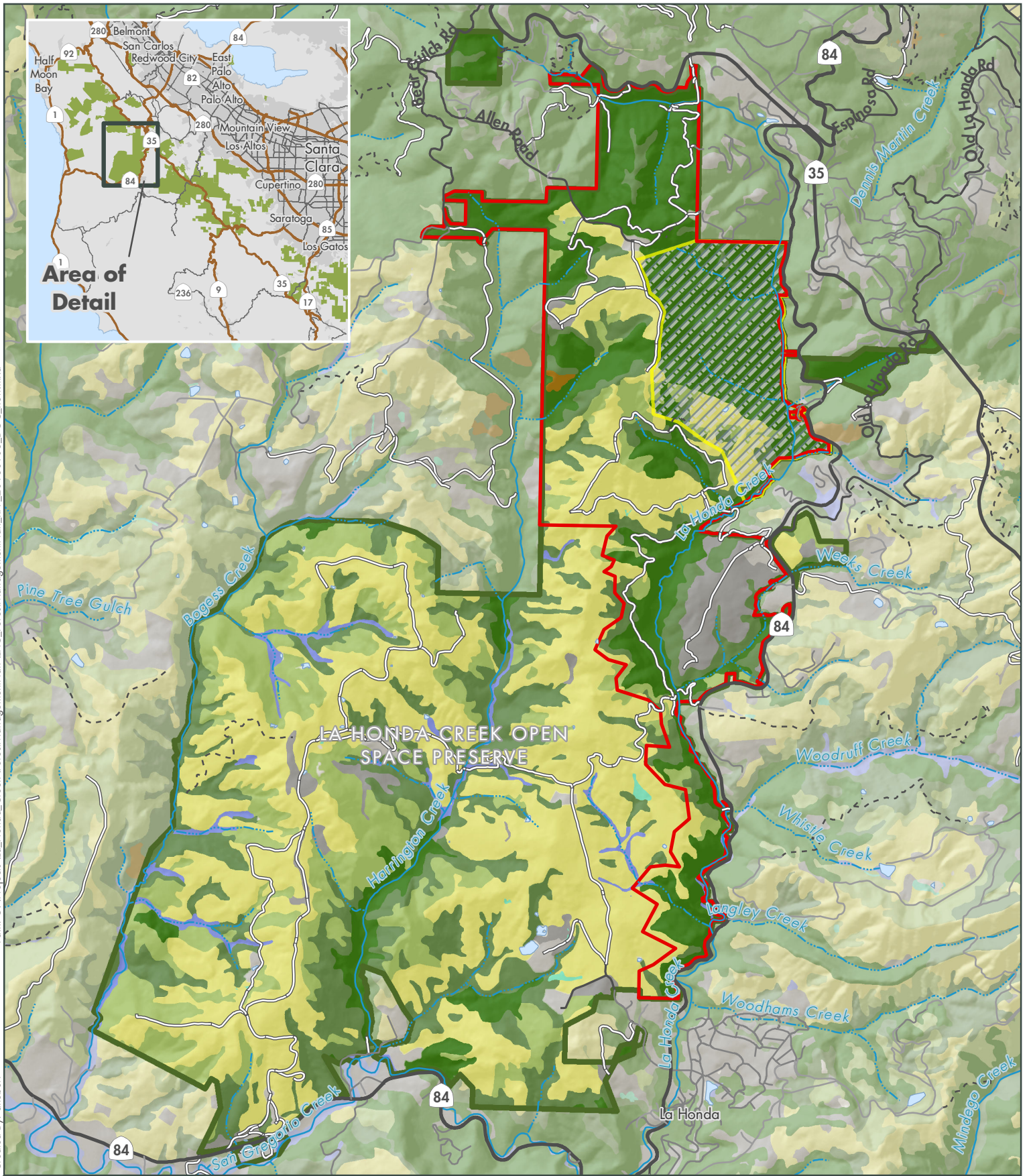
## Prepared by:

Matt Baldzikowski, Senior Resource Management Specialist, Natural Resources Department

## Graphics prepared by:

Aaron Hébert, Water Resources Specialist





### La Honda Forest Project

### La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

- |                   |                         |                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Preserve Boundary | Grassland               | Riparian                            |
| Project Area      | Coastal Scrub           | Wetland                             |
| Paved Road        | Chaparral               | Degraded                            |
| Unpaved Road      | Hardwood Forest         | Forest Conservation Management Unit |
| Trail             | Redwood and Douglas Fir |                                     |

Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District  
(MROSD)  
June 2019



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, these data do not represent a legal survey and are merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.