



Request for Proposals

**Livestock Operator Leases on
District Conservation Grazing
Lands**

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ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A1: Regional map of grazing unit locations
- Attachment A2: Johnston Ranch Grazing Unit Map
- Attachment A3: Lobitos Grazing Unit Map
- Attachment A4: Harrington Grazing Unit Map
- Attachment A5: Butano Farms Grazing Unit Map
- Attachment A6: Cloverdale Ranch Grazing Unit Map
- Attachment B: RFP Required Elements and Format for Submission
- Attachment C: Grazing Lease Agreement

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

a. *Invitation*

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is pleased to announce the opportunity for livestock operators to lease and graze the District’s (1) Johnston Ranch, (2) Elkus-Lobitos-South Cowell (hereafter “Lobitos”), (3) Driscoll Ranch (hereafter “Harrington”), (4) Butano Farms, and (5) Cloverdale Ranch Grazing Units. The District invites qualified livestock operators to submit a proposal for no more than three of the five listed grazing units. Proposals should reflect the operator’s relevant qualifications, experience, and desire to work with the District by utilizing conservation grazing to meet District goals (refer to Section V).

b. *Schedule for RFP Process*

Below are the tentative dates and deadlines for this RFP process. If the District finds it necessary to change any of the dates or times listed below, a formal addendum to the RFP will be issued and posted on the District’s website, <https://www.openspace.org/what-we-do/bids-proposals>. All dates are subject to change at the sole discretion of the District.

| <u>Action</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|---|---|
| <i>Release of RFP</i> | <i>January 14, 2025</i> |
| <i>Mandatory Informational Meeting</i> | <i>February 20, 2025</i> |
| <i>Individual Property Tours</i> | <i>Week of March 10th</i> |
| <i>Deadline to Submit Questions</i> | <i>March 14, 2025</i> |
| <i>Answers to Questions</i> | <i>March 28, 2025</i> |
| <i>Proposal Submittal Date</i> | <i>April 3, 2025</i> |
| <i>Interview/site visits</i> | <i>Weeks of April 14th and 21st</i> |
| <i>Selected Operator Signs Lease</i> | <i>May 14, 2025</i> |
| <i>District Board of Directors Meeting to Award Lease</i> | <i>May 28, 2025</i> |
| <i>Grazing Lease Term Begins</i> | <i>November 1, 2025</i> |

c. *Proposal Submission Instructions*

Interested operators shall prepare and submit their proposal in accordance with Section II of this RFP. **Only one proposal will be accepted from any one person, partnership, corporation, or other entity. The proposal must identify and list in order of preference the grazing units for which the Proposer is applying. The award of multiple grazing units to a single person or entity will be subject to the District’s sole discretion according to the criteria set forth in Section III of this RFP.**

PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM, THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025.

d. *Lease Agreement*

At the conclusion of the Request for Proposal process, the selected operator(s) will be required to sign the District’s standard Grazing Lease agreement (“Grazing Lease”) before the agreement can be presented to the Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled public meeting for their approval. If approved, the lease agreement(s) will be fully executed by the District.

The Grazing Lease for most units will have an initial term of five (5) years with two (2) optional extension periods of five (5) years each for a total of fifteen (15) years. The exercise of optional lease extensions will be at the District’s sole discretion. The District will consider the Lessee’s performance and adherence to the lease agreement, rangeland management plan and District regulations, as well as the District’s overall program goals in determining whether to extend a Grazing Lease. A copy of the Grazing Lease is included in this RFP as Attachment C.

For the Butano Farms Grazing Unit, the Grazing Lease will have a term of five (5) years. At the end of the term, the District intends to re-configure the lease premises and/or lease terms and to offer again the reconfigured grazing unit through a new competitive RFP process. Therefore, proposers interested in the Butano Farms Grazing Unit should only anticipate grazing the unit for the five (5) year term.

The rent structure of charging per Animal Unit Month (AUM) and the AUM fee itself is standard for all grazing leases on District property and is not a determining factor in the operator selection process.

e. Rent calculation

Rent for grazing leases is calculated utilizing an Animal Unit Month (AUM) system. AUM is defined as one Animal Unit Equivalent (AUE) grazing for one month. See AUE values below:

| Type of Livestock | Animal Unit Equivalent (AUEs) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Adult Cow with nursing calf up to 9 months old | 1.00 |
| Heifer or Steer, 2 years and older (1000 lbs. or more) | 1.00 |
| Yearling to 2-year-old (750 to 1000 lbs. or more) | 0.75 |
| Weaned Calf to Short Yearling (up to 750 lbs.) | 0.50 |
| Stocker Cattle (above 700 lbs.) | 0.75 |
| Stocker Cattle (below 700 lbs.) | 0.50 |
| Bull | 1.50 |

The per AUM rental rate shall be determined using the Grazing Rental Adjustment Table attached to the Grazing Lease (Attachment C), within which the average selling price of beef cattle per hundred-weight shall be matched with the appropriate price range found in Column 1 of the Grazing Rental Adjustment Table to determine the corresponding rental rate found opposite this entry in Column 3.

For the purpose of calculating the per AUM rental rate, the average selling price of beef cattle shall be taken as the average selling price of Medium Frame No.1 Muscling Steers and Heifers, 500-800 lbs., as reported by the Cattle Marketing Information Service, Inc., (Cattle-Fax) for the month of June prior to the start of the new lease year. If the average sales price of beef cattle is not obtainable in any year from Cattle-Fax as now constituted, then the average sales price to be used in determining the rental rate shall be obtained from some other authentic source to be selected by the District as providing a comparable price for this purpose.

Column 3 of the Grazing Rental Adjustment Table represents a 25% reduction that the District applies to offset potential impacts from predation that may occur on District lands. The District expressly prohibits the lethal take of any native wildlife predator, including mountain lions and coyotes even if a depredation permit is issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The District also requires the cooperation of operators to work with the District to deter and report predation. At its sole discretion the District may

reimburse operators for the confirmed loss of stock due to native wildlife predation.

The following is an example for calculating the annual grazing rent:

Assume the Grazing Capacity authorized by the District for the first lease year is as follows:

Ranch A - 40 AUMs for 12 months = 480 AUMs

Total Grazing = 480 AUMs

Per AUM Rent derived from Column 3 of Grazing Rental Adjustment Table = \$10.50

Rent for first lease year = 480 AUM X \$10.50 = \$5,040.00

The AUM rate is calculated annually each June (to reflect trends in the cattle market) utilizing the average blended sale price per hundred weight of stocker cattle (heifers and steers 500-800 lbs.). Rent will be paid in two installments, the first in November and the second in May.

II. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

a. *General Information*

Copies of this RFP, including supporting documents, may be obtained from the District's website, which can be found on the "Bids and Proposals" page <https://www.openspace.org/what-we-do/bids-proposals>

b. *Mandatory informational meeting*

There will be a **mandatory** informational meeting at the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Administrative Office at 5050 El Camino Real, Los Altos, California 94022 on **Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 5:00 PM.** Any operator interested in submitting a proposal **MUST** attend this meeting, **however attendance may either be in person or virtual.** Please limit the number of people attending the informational meeting to three from each interested party. You must make a reservation to attend no later than **5:00 PM, Thursday, February 13, 2025.** To make a reservation contact:

Matthew Shapero
Conservation Grazing Program Manager
mshapero@openspace.org
(650) 625-6510

Those who have registered to attend virtually will be emailed a link to the virtual meeting prior to the meeting date.

For those applicants who want to tour an individual grazing unit during the RFP process, the District may schedule **optional** field tours the week of March 10th, 2025. Information regarding the specific dates, times, and locations for field tours will be made available.

c. *Questions and Answers*

All questions and/or requests for explanation are due by 5:00 PM, Friday, March 14, 2025. Answers will be provided no later than 5:00 PM, Friday, March 28, 2025. Questions may be emailed (mshapero@openspace.org), mailed (5050 El Camino Real, Los Altos, CA, 94022), or hand-delivered to the District Administrative Office. All the questions and answers will be listed as an addendum to the RFP. The District reserves the right to post addenda until 48 hours prior to the proposal submittal date and time. The RFP and all addenda will be made available on the Bids and Proposals page of the District website, <https://www.openspace.org/what-we-do/bids-proposals>.

The addenda issued by the District become part of this RFP. Each Proposer is responsible for checking the District's website for addenda, notices, and answers to questions to ensure they have access to all pertinent information. In the event a Proposer obtains this RFP through any means other than the District's website, the District will not be responsible for the completeness, accuracy or timeliness of the final RFP document. Proposers can rely only on this RFP and any subsequent addenda, notices, and answers issued by the District. Proposer cannot rely on any other written or any oral statements of the District or its officers, Directors, employees or agents regarding matters covered by the RFP, including information that is sent separately via email since the District cannot guarantee the successful delivery and receipt of email content.

d. *Communication Restrictions*

With the exception of interviews and site visits, Proposers shall not communicate with any outside evaluation panelists or District staff, other than Matthew Shapero, Conservation Grazing Program

Manager, regarding this solicitation until after the award of contract. Attempts to contact District staff other than the Conservation Grazing Program Manager during the solicitation process may result in disqualification.

Proposers may not collude, directly or indirectly, among themselves in regard to this solicitation; attempt to influence any other proposers or potential respondents or participants in the solicitation process, including District staff member or evaluation team members; or submit incorrect information in the response to this RFP or misrepresent or fail to disclose material facts during the evaluation process. Any evidence that indicates that a Proposer has failed to adhere to the above may result in the Proposer's disqualification from the solicitation.

e. Submission and Required Documents

Complete proposals must be received by the District no later than **3:00 PM THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025**. Proposals may be submitted in any of the following ways:

- Emailed to Matthew Shapero, mshapero@openspace.org. Make certain that "2025 GRAZING LEASE RFP" is in the subject line of the email. Proposals without this title in the subject line run the risk of being overlooked and/or not included for evaluation.
- Delivered through the US Postal Service or other carrier to the following address:
Matthew Shapero
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022-1404
- Hand-delivered. If hand-delivered, it must be placed in the District mail slot at the front door, or handed to the receptionist, at the address identified above. Delivery receipts will be available upon request.

To be considered complete, your proposal must include all the required elements as described in Attachment B, "RFP Required Elements and Format for Submission."

III. BASIS OF TENANT SELECTION

a. The Selection Process

The District shall award one or more of the Grazing Lease(s) to the individual(s) or firm(s) whose proposal demonstrates an understanding and willingness to conduct their grazing activities in a manner that will promote maintenance and improvements to the property, enhance the natural resource value of the land, and work with the District to achieve the District's recreational and resource management goals.

The selection process will not be based on the "lowest bid." Instead, the District will select the proposal(s) that the District determines best achieves the District's goals for its conservation grazing program.

The per AUM fee is standard for all grazing leases on District property and is not a determining factor in the tenant selection process.

The selection process for the District's grazing tenant follows five basic steps:

1. Receive and review proposals, including qualification requirements.
2. Narrow the selection to the most highly qualified individuals or firms using the Evaluation Criteria (see below).
3. Conduct interviews and a site visit to a ranch that the applicant is currently operating with the most qualified individuals or firms.
4. Select the most qualified individual or firm based on the Evaluation Criteria and interviews/site visits.
5. District Board of Directors consider approval of recommendations to award Grazing Lease(s).

b. Evaluation Criteria

The District will evaluate the received proposals based on the following criteria and weighted scoring. **For further information on how to complete each of these sections, please refer to Attachment B, "RFP Required Elements and Format for Submission."** In conducting the evaluation, the District reserves the right to rely on any information outside of the proposals or received from sources other than the respondents.

The District will establish an evaluation panel to score the written proposals. Each member of this panel will independently evaluate and score each proposal. A Proposer's final numerical score for its written proposal will be the average of the numerical scores given by each member of the evaluation panel for that proposal.

The below table identifies the maximum points that may be awarded for each category that will be evaluated in the proposals ("Total Score Without Oral Interview/Site Visit"). The District will not issue separate scores for each Grazing Unit. Rather, the District will issue a single score for each proposal and will use this score to rank proposers for each Grazing Unit for which they propose. For example, if a proposal is awarded 85 points and proposes to graze Johnston Ranch and Harrington, the 85 points will be used to rank the Proposer for each unit. A Proposer is eligible for points as a tenant in good standing under Section 5.e, only if the Proposer is an existing tenant on a Grazing Unit that is included in this RFP.

| SECTION | SCORE (points) |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Introduction | |
| a. Cover page | * |
| b. Table of Contents | * |
| 2. Business Information | 10 (Section total) |
| a. Statement of Experience | 10 |
| b. List of References | * |
| c. Financial Statement | * |
| d. Grazing Lease Agreement | * |
| 3. Background & Technical Experience | 40 (Section total) |
| a. Livestock Operating Experience | 10 |
| b. Managing Livestock Conflicts | 10 |
| c. Managing for Natural Resource Objectives | 20 |
| 4. Operations and Employee Staffing | 25 (Section Total) |
| a. Operational Plan | 20 |
| b. Employee Staffing Plan | 5 |
| 5. Alignment with District Agricultural Policy (<i>adopted November 2023</i>)** | 25 (Section Total) |
| a. Proposal furthers District policy goals on Environmental Sustainability | 5 |
| b. Proposal furthers District policy goals on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | 5 |
| c. Proposal furthers District policy goals on community outreach, education, and local food systems | 5 |
| d. Proposer lives in or operates a business in San Mateo County | 5 |
| e. Proposer is currently a District tenant in good standing | 5 |
| Total Score Without Oral Interview/Site Visit (sum of Sections 2-5) | 100 |

*Indicates pass/fail section; should section be missing or incomplete, proposal may not be eligible for further evaluation.

**The District's Agricultural Policy can be accessed here, www.openspace.org/who-we-are/policies

The District reserves the right to conduct oral interviews with the top-ranked Proposers based on the interim proposal scores (Total Score Without Oral Interview/Site Visit). If the District elects to conduct oral interviews and site visits, the final scoring and ranking will be based on the Total Score With Oral Interview/Site Visit. There will be a maximum total of fifty (50) points available for the Interview and fifty (50) points available for the Site Visit. The total maximum points for the Total Score With Oral Interview/Site Visit is two hundred (200) points. If the District elects not to conduct oral interviews/site visits, the final scoring and ranking will be based on the Total Score Without Oral Interview/Site Visit.

If the District decides to conduct oral interviews and site visits, it will do so as follows.

The District will determine how many of the highest ranked Proposers from the Total Score Without Oral Interview/Site Visit it will interview. The District will interview and conduct site visits of the highest ranked Proposers within the number of Proposers it decides to interview. For example, if the District decides to interview four (4) Proposers, it will interview the four (4) highest ranked Proposers.

The District will establish an interview and site visit panel, which may include some or all of the same persons who evaluated the written proposals. Each member of this panel will independently evaluate and score each interviewed Proposer based upon the overall impression of the Proposers' ability to successfully fulfill the terms of the Grazing Lease consistent with the District's expectations. Factors that are likely to be relevant in forming such an impression include, but are not limited to: (1) the Proposer's ability to clearly communicate its understanding of the District's objectives and its vision to achieve such objectives, (2) the Proposer's enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the District's grazing program, resource management goals, and District mission, (3) Proposer's willingness to work with the District in a cooperative, flexible, constructive, and transparent manner, and (4) the content and organization of the Proposer's presentation and its ability to effectively respond to questions posed by the District during the interview and site visit. The District also will consider and score the quality of a Proposer's operations during the site visit. The location of the interview and site visit will be at the discretion of the Proposer but must be within a ninety (90) minute travel-time radius of the District's Administrative Office in Los Altos, California. Exceptions to the travel-time limit will be made at the sole discretion of District staff.

A Proposer's final numerical score for the oral interview/site visit will be the average of the numerical scores given for the oral interviews/site visits by the members of the panel for that Proposer.

c. Award of Grazing Unit Leases

Based on the District's final ranking of the Proposers, District staff will make a recommendation for award of a lease for each available Grazing Unit. The District shall have the right to terminate negotiations with a selected Proposer(s) and commence negotiations with the next highest-ranked responsive and responsible Proposer(s) at any time.

Generally speaking, award(s) will be recommended to the highest-ranking Proposer(s) for each Grazing Unit. However, the District will have the sole discretion, considering the overall grazing program goals, to determine whether to award multiple Grazing Units to a single operator. Proposers may submit for no more than three (3) Grazing Units and are required to list the Grazing Units in order of preference. If a Proposer is the highest-ranked for its most preferred Grazing Unit, District staff will recommend awarding a lease to that Proposer for its most preferred Grazing Unit. If a Proposer is the highest-ranked for both its most preferred Grazing Unit and another Grazing Unit(s), the District may award the lease for the latter Grazing Unit to a lower-ranked Proposer for that unit if the District determines that doing so will further the conservation grazing program goals and District's Agricultural Policy.

The District shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to choose not to award a lease for any particular Grazing Unit.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

a. RFP Preparation, Ownership and Disclosure

The District is not responsible for any expenses which Proposers may incur in preparing and submitting a proposal, including but not limited to, production of the proposal, interviews/presentations, travel, and accommodations. The District reserves the right to request or negotiate modifications to the proposals that are deemed appropriate. All proposals received in response to this RFP will become the District's property and will not be returned. When the lease agreement is awarded, all documentation produced as part of the lease agreement will become the exclusive property of the District.

b. Rejection of Proposal(s); RFP Cancellation

The District, in its sole discretion, may waive minor informalities or irregularities in any and/or all proposals. The District reserves the right to reject any or all responses that materially differ from any terms contained in this RFP or from any of the attachments hereto, to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals and to provide an opportunity for Proposers to correct minor and immaterial errors contained in their proposals. The District shall have sole discretion to determine what constitutes an informality or minor irregularity. Furthermore, the District retains the right to reject any and all proposals and/or cancel this RFP at any time. If the RFP is canceled, the District will post notification of the cancellation on the District website.

c. Public Records and Proprietary Information; Indemnification

All proposals, strategies, supporting information, rate schedules and other information and documents are presumptively public records under the California Public Records Act (Gov't Code section 6250 et seq.), subject to prompt disclosure upon request by any member of the public. If confidential or proprietary information is submitted with the proposal, operators shall identify each and every specific item and each and every page considered as such and segregate the information into a separate envelope or electronic file labeled conspicuously as *Confidential*, with a cover page describing the information and the legal basis for the exemption from public disclosure. Any material marked or claimed as confidential or proprietary may be returned to the operator by the District or destroyed and may not be considered in the review of proposals if the claim does not appear justified or would inhibit the public purposes of the project proposed.

Notwithstanding the above, the District will accept the following sections of a proposal as confidential, and not subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act, if properly marked as confidential and segregated in accordance with this Section IV.c of the RFP:

- Section 2.a.: Personal contact information will be treated as confidential
- 2.b.: Personal contact information will be treated as confidential
- Section 2.c.: Financial documentation and statements will be treated as confidential
- Section 3.a.: Personal contact information will be treated as confidential

If the documents have been properly marked and expressly accepted as confidential and proprietary in writing by the District, the District will make its best effort to advise the operator of any Public Records Act request, should any be received, seeking documents claimed to be confidential or proprietary, to give the operator an opportunity to take legal steps to protect such property from disclosure to a third-party requester. The District expressly disclaims any duty and will not defend the confidentiality or proprietary nature of any information submitted. **By submitting any confidential or proprietary information to the District, the operator agrees to hold harmless and indemnify and defend the District and its officers, employees, and agents for any and all costs, including attorney's fees, incurred by the District or awarded to a Public Records Act requester relating to a request for release of Proposer's data should the**

Proposer ask the information to be handled as proprietary or confidential.

All proposals will be held as confidential until the District has completed its evaluation, negotiated the Grazing Leases with selected Proposers and made its notice to recommend award before the Board of Directors. All Proposers will receive notice of the District's recommendation to award by email. All proposals and other records related to this RFP shall not be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act until the District issues the notice of recommended award.

d. Protests

If a Proposer wants to dispute an award recommendation, it must submit a protest in writing to the District no later than five (5) business days after the District publishes its notice of recommended award. All protests must detail the grounds and factual basis for the protest and provide all supporting information. Protests will not be considered for any the following: non-responsive Proposals; late submission of Proposals; or a dispute regarding the RFP requirements and/or specifications that could have been addressed by submitting a question and/or objection. Failure to submit a timely written protest to the contact listed below will bar consideration of the protest.

Protests must be submitted to Matthew Shapero, Conservation Grazing Program Manager, mshapero@openspace.org.

The Assistant General Manager, or designee, will issue a written decision on any protest. The decision may be based on the written protest alone or may informally gather evidence from the protestor filing the protest or any other person having relevant information. The determination of the Assistant General Manager, or designee, on the protest shall be final and non-appealable. No public hearing will be held on the protest. Time being of the essence, the District reserves the right to proceed with award of the Agreement and commencement of the Agreement notwithstanding any pending protest or legal challenge.

V. DISTRICT BACKGROUND, GOALS, AND PROPERTIES OVERVIEW

a. District background

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, located on the San Francisco Peninsula, owns and manages over 70,000 acres of land ranging in size from 55 to over 18,000 acres. The District's coastal mission is “[t]o acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.” The preserves are generally kept in a natural condition to protect their ecological integrity and habitat. They are developed with only those amenities needed for agricultural operations and low-intensity recreation.

In 2004 the District expanded its jurisdiction to include the lands of the San Mateo coast. In keeping with the history of grazing and agricultural uses in the region and the importance of preserving grassland habitats, the District developed a Conservation Grazing Management Policy. The stated goal of this policy is to “[w]here appropriate manage District land with livestock conservation grazing that is protective of natural resources and that is compatible with public access; to maintain and enhance the diversity of native plant and animal communities, manage vegetation fuel for fire protection, help sustain the local agricultural economy, and preserve and foster appreciation for the region’s rural agricultural heritage.”

b. District goals

The District utilizes livestock grazing as one of many tools to achieve resource management goals within its Preserves, which include reducing non-native invasive plant species, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting the growth of native vegetation. Grazing is also utilized as tool to reduce thatch build up, which negatively impacts growth of desired vegetation and adds to the wildfire fuel load. Grazing should be conducted in a manner that does not negatively impact freshwater resources or leads to increased soil erosion. Livestock operators are expected to implement adaptive management techniques so that intensity, frequency, timing, and duration of grazing align with the District's natural resource management goals.

While public access is currently limited on many of the properties included in this RFP, public access along designated trails and/or interior ranch roads for hiking, equestrian, bicycling and/or limited dog-on-leash may be implemented in the future. Livestock operators shall conduct their operation in a manner that provides for visitor access, recreational opportunities, and the safety of Preserve visitors.

c. Available Conservation Grazing Properties Overview

The three grazing unit properties included in this RFP have unique topographic and vegetative characteristics with specific management requirements and resource management objectives. Livestock infrastructure, including fencing, water systems, corral facilities, and ranch roads vary in condition across properties and will require maintenance, and in some cases replacement, to conduct grazing practices in accordance with the resource management objectives of the District. At the sole discretion of the District, the District may fund some improvements in support of the rangeland management goals. The livestock operator will be responsible for all regular routine maintenance and upkeep. See Attachment C of the Grazing Lease for a breakdown of maintenance, repair, and improvement responsibilities. It should be noted that predation on livestock is a risk in these landscapes; the District will work with tenants to pursue non-lethal approaches to reducing predation risk.

The suggested stocking rate and season of use for each property will be consistent with a District

Rangeland Management Plan (RMP). Stocking rates are flexible and shall be adjusted annually to accommodate forage production levels, which fluctuate annually depending upon quantity and timing of precipitation. A brief overview of each property is included below.

Johnston Ranch Grazing Unit

- **Location:** approximately one (1) mile east of the City of Half Moon Bay on Higgins Canyon Road
- **Size:** approximately 412 acres considered suitable for grazing
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 366 Animal Unit Months (AUMs, equivalent to 31 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** currently seasonally grazed (mid-Summer through mid-Winter) as a single unit by a grazing tenant but can be grazed either seasonally or year-round, depending on operational needs, resource management considerations, and livestock water availability, among other factors
- **Fencing:** Perimeter fencing is present on the property; currently no functional cross fencing
- **Stock water:** one pond and one spring provide stock water year round; stock water availability can become marginal during drought years; a project is currently underway that, if completed, would improve the reliability of year-round stockwater
- **Other infrastructure:** One small corral in barnyard area allows for shipping and receiving of livestock; barn is available for storage
- **Predation:** No predation events have been documented or confirmed in recent years, but mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Natural resource management considerations:** Vegetation at this site includes a diversity of native grasses and forbs. The District is interested in grazing management that favors these species. Several special status plant and animal species are known to occur or have potential to occur at this site and modifications to grazing and other management may be required to ensure their viability. These species include California red-legged frog, Savannah sparrow, and American badger among others. There are several high priority invasive plants at this site, including purple starthistle and jubata grass. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District staff or contractors on management of invasive species. Care should be taken to limit the spread of these species within the site or to other locations. This site tends to have high rates of brush encroachment. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District Staff or contactors on management of brush encroachment. Protection of the Arroyo Leon which, most of the Johnston Ranch drains into, and protection of associated aquatic features and habitat within the ranch are a high priority for the District. Management of livestock should be conducted with careful consideration of impacts to habitat value and water quality of the riparian corridors and associated aquatic features.

Lobitos Grazing Unit

- **Location:** between Purisima and Lobitos Creeks, approximately 0.5 miles east of Highway 1, in coastal San Mateo County
- **Size:** approximately 1,210 acres with approximately 933 acres considered suitable for grazing divided into four (4) pastures.
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 863.0 AUMs (equivalent to 72 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** grazed year-round with pasture rotation
- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the four pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** combination of springs and ponds; new ridgeline water system installed Fall/Winter 2024/2025 should improve water availability and distribution; amount of water availability may limit pasture use during dry season
- **Other infrastructure:** corral along Verde Road serves as primary location for processing and shipping/receiving of livestock
- **Predation:** Loss of livestock to predation has occurred and been documented in recent years; both

mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.

- **Natural resource management considerations:** Vegetation at this site includes a diversity of native grasses and forbs. The District is interested in grazing management that favors these species. Several special status plant and animal species are known to occur or have potential to occur at this site and modifications to grazing and other management may be required to ensure their viability. These species include California red-legged frog, Savannah sparrow, American badger, San Mateo tree lupine, and Choris's popcorn flower among others. There are several invasive exotic plants at this site. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District staff or contractors on management of invasive species. Care should be taken to limit the spread of these species within the site or to other locations. This site tends to have high rates of brush encroachment. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District Staff or contactors on management of brush encroachment. Protection of Purisima Creek and Lobitos Creek, which border the north and south sides of this grazing unit, and protection of associated aquatic features and habitat within the ranch are a high priority for the District. Management of livestock should be conducted with careful consideration of impacts to habitat value and water quality of the riparian corridors and associated aquatic features.

Harrington Grazing Unit

- **Location:** located along Highway 84 north of the town of La Honda in San Mateo County; bordered by Lone Madrone Grazing Unit to the east
- **Size:** approximately 3,595 acres with approximately 2,611 acres considered suitable for grazing divided into twelve (12) pastures.
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 2016.0 AUMs (equivalent to 168 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** grazed year-round with pasture rotation
- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the twelve pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** water source is a combination of springs, ponds, and creek diversion; amount of water availability may limit use during dry season in some pastures
- **Other infrastructure:** three (3) corrals provide adequate access for cattle processing and shipping/receiving; barns are available for storage; residence is available for agricultural employee of the operation and included as part of the grazing lease
- **Predation:** Loss of livestock to predation has occurred and been documented in recent years; both mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Natural resource management considerations:** Vegetation at this site includes a diversity of native grasses and forbs. The District is interested in grazing management that favors these species. Several special status plant and animal species are known to occur or have potential to occur at this site and modifications to grazing and other management may be required to ensure their viability. These species include California red-legged frog, Savannah sparrow, American badger, Western pond turtle, Western burrowing owl, Western leatherwood, and California bottlebrush grass among others. There are several high priority invasive exotic plants at this site. In particular, distaff thistle, purple starthistle, yellow starthistle, and medusahead grass are abundant in some parts of the property. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District staff or contractors on management of invasive species. Care should be taken to limit the spread of these species within the site or to other locations. The selected tenant may also be asked to coordinate with District Staff or contactors on management of brush encroachment. Protection of Harrington Creek and La Honda Creek, which border the north and south sides of this grazing unit, and protection of associated aquatic features and habitat within the ranch are a high priority for the District. Management of livestock should be conducted with careful consideration of impacts to habitat value and water quality of the riparian corridors and associated aquatic features.

Butano Farms Grazing Unit

- **Location:** located south of the town of Pescadero in San Mateo County; there are two non-contiguous areas that comprise the grazing unit; western area is accessed from Bean Hollow Road; eastern area is accessed from Pescadero Creek Road
- **Size:** The western lease area (“High Hill”) totals approximately 198 acres, all of which is considered suitable for grazing. The eastern unit lease area (“Lemonade Stand”) totals 245 acres, all of which is considered suitable for grazing
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 551.5 AUMs (equivalent to 46.0 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** year-round grazing
- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the twelve pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** water source is a combination of springs, ponds, and creek diversion
- **Other infrastructure:** western and eastern areas each have a corral; western corral is new and allows for shipping, receiving, and processing of cattle; eastern corral is in marginal condition and only allows for shipping and receiving
- **Predation:** No predation events have been documented or confirmed in recent years, but mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Natural resource management considerations:** Vegetation at this site includes a diversity of native grasses and forbs. The District is interested in grazing management that favors these species. Several special status plant and animal species are known to occur or have potential to occur at this site and modifications to grazing and other management may be required to ensure their viability. These species include San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, Savannah sparrow, American badger, and Western burrowing owl, Johnny nip, and San Francisco gum plant among others. There are several invasive exotic plant species at this site. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District staff or contractors on management of invasive species. Care should be taken to limit the spread of these species within the site or to other locations. This site has high rates of brush encroachment. The selected tenant may also be asked to coordinate with District Staff or contactors on management of brush encroachment. This site drains into Butano Creek, Pescadero Creek, and Arroyo de Los Frijoles. Protection of associated aquatic features and habitat within the ranch are a high priority for the District. Management of livestock should be conducted with careful consideration of impacts to habitat value and water quality of the riparian corridors and associated aquatic features.

Cloverdale Ranch Grazing Unit

- **Location:** located south of the town of Pescadero in San Mateo County; ranch is bounded to the west by Highway 1, to the east by Cloverdale Ranch Road, and to the south by Gazos Creek Road
- **Size:** approximately 3,375 acres with approximately 1,095 acres considered suitable for grazing divided into nineteen (19) pastures.
- **Stocking rate on average year:** 1250.6 AUMs (equivalent to 105.0 cows year-round)
- **Grazing regime:** grazed year-round with pasture rotation
- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing around the property and cross fencing between the nineteen pastures is adequate; natural barriers serve in place of some perimeter and cross fencing
- **Stock water:** water source is a combination of springs, ponds, and wells; amount of water availability may limit use during dry season in some pastures
- **Other infrastructure:** two corrals are available; Holm Ranch corral allows for shipping/receiving cattle; Goat Ranch corral allows for shipping, receiving, and processing; barn is available for storage
- **Predation:** No predation events have been documented or confirmed in recent years, but mountain lions and coyotes are known to occur in the area.
- **Natural resource management considerations:** Vegetation at this site includes a diversity of

native grasses and forbs. The District is interested in grazing management that favors these species. Several special status plant and animal species are known to occur or have potential to occur at this site and modifications to grazing and other management may be required to ensure their viability. These species include San Francisco garter snake, California red-legged frog, Savannah sparrow, American badger, and Western burrowing owl, Point Reyes meadowfoam, harlequin lotus, Choris's popcorn flower, Johnny nip, and San Francisco gum plant among others. There are several invasive exotic plant species at this site. The selected tenant may be asked to coordinate with District staff or contractors on management of invasive species. Care should be taken to limit the spread of these species within the site or to other locations. This site has high rates of brush encroachment. The selected tenant may also be asked to coordinate with District Staff or contactors on management of brush encroachment. This site drains into Butano Creek and Arroyo de Los Frijoles and has numerous aquatic features that are critical habitat for sensitive wildlife species. Protection of aquatic features and associated habitat within the ranch are a high priority for the District. Management of livestock should be conducted with careful consideration of impacts to habitat value and water quality of the riparian corridors and associated aquatic features.



ATTACHMENTS

A1– A6

(to be downloaded separately)

- A1 Regional map of grazing unit locations
- A2 Johnston Ranch Grazing Unit Map
- A3 Lobitos Grazing Unit Map
- A4 Harrington Grazing Unit Map
- A5 Butano Farms Grazing Unit Map
- A6 Cloverdale Ranch Grazing Unit Map



ATTACHMENT B

RFP Required Elements and Format for
Submission

Individuals or firms shall prepare and submit a proposal with the following elements clearly indicating section name and number, question number, and response. All proposals shall be type-written using 12-point font on standard 8 ½ x 11 paper. In your proposal formatting, list out and maintain the section and sub-section structure when answering questions/prompts. Page limitations are listed below by section and shall not be exceeded; however, applicants should not feel obligated to meet the maximum allowed. Succinct, topical, and clear proposals will be scored favorably.

Proposals that do not include all the elements listed below may be considered incomplete and disqualified from consideration.

1. Introduction
 - a. Cover page
 - b. Table of Contents
2. Business Information
 - a. Statement of Experience
 - b. List of References
 - c. Financial Statement
 - d. A statement of acceptance of the terms of the "Grazing Lease Agreement"
3. Background & Technical Experience
 - a. Livestock Operating Experience
 - b. Potential Livestock Conflicts
 - i. Public Lands and Recreation
 - ii. Predation
 - c. Managing for Natural Resource Objectives
4. Operations and Employee Staffing
 - a. Operational Plan
 - b. Employee Staffing Plan
5. Alignment with District Agricultural Policy (*adopted November 2023*)
 - a. Proposal addresses District policy goals on Environmental Sustainability
 - b. Proposal addresses District policy goals on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - c. Proposal furthers District policy goals on community outreach, education, and local food systems
 - d. Proposal documents the location of business and/or residence
 - e. Proposal documents current or past grazing lease agreements with the District

1. Introduction

- a. Cover letter (**1 page maximum**)

The proposal must include a Cover Letter containing the following information:

- i. Identify the submitting individual or firm. Indicate if the proposal is being submitted as a joint venture, partnership and/or other entity other than an individual. Include a description of the ownership structure, including

names of individual partners, investors, and/or officers.

- ii. Identify the full name, title, and contact information (telephone number, physical address, and e-mail address) of:
 - a. Individual authorized, on behalf of the organization, to contact for clarification.
 - b. Individual authorized, on behalf of the organization, to negotiate the contract.
 - c. Individual authorized, on behalf of the organization, to contractually obligate the organization.
- iii. Acknowledge receipt of all addenda to this RFP.
- iv. Contain the following statement immediately above the Proposer's signature: "The undersigned, by submitting the foregoing proposal, declares under penalty of perjury: (i) that the proposal is not made in the interest of, or on behalf of, any undisclosed person, partnership, company, association, organization, or corporation; (ii) the proposal is genuine and not collusive or sham; (iii) the proposer has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any other proposer to put in a false or sham proposal, and has not directly or indirectly colluded, conspired, connived, or agreed with any proposer or anyone else to put in a sham proposal; (iv) the proposer has not attempted to influence anyone else's response to this solicitation; (v) the proposer has not attempted to influence anyone else to secure an advantage against the District or influence the outcome of the solicitation; and (vi) that all statements contained in the proposal are true."
- v. Be signed by the individual authorized, on behalf of the organization, to contractually obligate the organization.

b. **Table of Contents (1 page maximum)**

The proposal shall include a Table of Contents which lists each Section and Subsection of the proposal and the corresponding page number.

2. **Business Information**

a. **Statement of Experience (2 page maximum)**

Proposal shall include a Statement of Experience briefly describing relevant experience. Please include the following:

- i. Business name and address (headquarters and other office locations if applicable).

- ii. Description of organization's structure, principals, employees, client base, etc., to demonstrate the stability and strength of the business.
- iii. Description of organization's agricultural operation, including type/age class of livestock produced, production methods, marketing methods and additional commodities produced.
- iv. Area(s) of specialization and expertise (if applicable).
- v. Length of time managing cattle grazing on (a) publicly owned lands and (b) private lands.
- vi. Brief description and location of facilities within the business' ownership or control that directly enhance the ability to fulfill the terms and conditions of the lease and management plan.

b. List of References (**1 page maximum each**)

Provide a list of three (3) references from three (3) different external agencies/clients /advisors who have knowledge of your cattle grazing operation and who are willing to validate your past performance managing livestock and natural resources on leased and/or owned land. At least one (1) reference shall be from a past or current landowner/agency from whom the individual or firm submitting this proposal has been in a grazing contract or agreement with in the past five (5) years.

Each reference listed must include:

- i. Name of Contact Person
- ii. Name of Company/Agency
- iii. Telephone Number
- iv. Physical Address
- v. E-Mail Address
- vi. Brief description of the location of the grazed property and length of time or dates the property was grazed

c. Financial Statement:

Provide written evidence proving the financial ability to purchase livestock, make necessary infrastructure improvements, provide care for livestock, and to make timely rent payments. Written evidence will include a certified financial report or a certified statement of financial condition. This requirement could be satisfied by providing a balance sheet indicating assets and liabilities, which is certified by a certified public accountant (CPA) *or* certified as true and correct by an officer of the business, indicated by a date and signature on the bottom of the statement. Alternative materials

and documents will be considered by the District on a case-by-case basis, and the District may request additional information after the proposal submission, if it deems necessary to adequately assess the proposer's financial condition.

If the operator is a sole proprietor or a combination of sole proprietors, a financial statement is required for each person in the operation. If the operator is a legal entity (e.g., partnership, corporation, or other corporate entity organized under the laws of California), or a combination of legal entities, a financial statement is required for each entity.

In addition to a Financial Statement, please clearly and concisely respond to each of the following questions (**1 page maximum**):

- i. In the past ten (10) years, have you, your partners, and/or your subcontractors defaulted in the performance of a contract or lease, related to your livestock operation, leading the other party to terminate your contract? If answer is ' Yes', please offer a detailed explanation.
- ii. Are you, your partners, and/or subcontractors currently involved in any litigation or bankruptcy proceedings which now or in the future could affect your ability to pay rent or perform within the terms of the lease agreement? If answer is ' Yes', please offer a detailed explanation.
- iii. In the past ten (10) years, have you, your partners, and/or subcontractors had any lawsuits filed against you related to your livestock operation? If answer is ' Yes', please offer a detailed explanation, including the circumstances, parties involved and outcome.
- iv. Do you, your partners, and/or subcontractors have any civil or criminal litigation or investigations pending in relation to livestock and/or agricultural production? If answer is ' Yes', please offer a detailed explanation.

d. Grazing Lease Agreement

A statement of the applicant's acceptance of the terms in the Grazing Lease Agreement (Attachment C), including insurance and indemnification requirements.

3. Background & Technical Experience (Alignment with District Conservation Grazing Policy)

a. Livestock Operating Experience (**3 page maximum**)

- i. List each property that you currently graze (private and publicly owned) or incorporate into your livestock operation. For each property, please include the following information:

1. Location
 2. Size
 3. Duration of grazing agreement or lease
 4. Detailed description of rangeland/vegetation types/topography
 5. Season of use
 6. Type of livestock grazed (cow/calf, stocker, etc.)
 7. Name of the landowner
 8. Proof of Insurance
 - a. A current certificate of insurance covering the property(ies) that you currently graze
- ii. The grazing lease requires that the grazing operator perform maintenance to the infrastructure on the property and—in certain circumstances—make capital improvements. Describe, in detail, your ability to perform the following infrastructure work. Describe similar projects and show examples of infrastructure work you have completed as relevant to your current or past grazing operations (photographic documentation is encouraged). Please date and caption photographs if included. **(4 page maximum)**
1. Ranch road maintenance and repair (grading, culverts, water diversions, etc.)
 2. New fence/gate installation and repair of existing fences/gates
 3. Spring development, spring box repair/maintenance, trough repair/maintenance, and water line installation.
 4. Development, repair, and maintenance of corrals and shipping facilities
 5. Site cleanup/debris removal
- iii. Describe or list all equipment that you own or have readily available for use that will directly enhance your livestock operation and your ability to achieve the desired resource management objectives and infrastructure improvements. (Tractors, cattle trucks, portable welders, woodchippers, etc.) **(1 page maximum)**
- iv. Please list or describe any other factors or considerations not stated elsewhere that you believe may be relevant in the selection process (e.g., awards or recognitions received, unique skillsets, etc.). **(1 page maximum)**

b. Potential Livestock Conflicts

- i. Describe your experience (if any) managing a grazing operation on public lands and/or lands with public access and recreation. Include size of operation, duration grazing these properties, types of recreation

(equestrian, biking, hiking, dog use), and an estimate of recreational use (frequency and number of users). Describe adaptive measures that you have utilized or plan to utilize to reduce the risk of human/livestock conflicts on grazed properties. Describe issues that you have encountered, your reaction to the issue, and mitigating measures you employed to prevent future issues pertaining to human/livestock conflicts. **(1 page maximum)**

ii. Describe your experience (if any) managing a grazing operation in the presence of predators. Include the location of the operation(s)/properties, the kind of predators, and impacts to cattle. Describe adaptive measures that you have utilized or plan to utilize to reduce the risk of livestock/predator conflicts. Describe how you have responded or plan to respond should your operation be impacted by predation. **(1 page maximum)**

c. Managing for Natural Resource Objectives

i. Give a detailed description of your experience managing a grazing operation(s) under a natural resource management plan to achieve specific natural resource objectives. Describe cattle management techniques you employed to achieve the resource management objectives and observed results (positive or negative). **(2 page maximum)**

ii. Describe your experience utilizing livestock grazing to manage invasive plant species such as purple starthistle, yellow starthistle, medusahead, barbed goatgrass and/or distaff thistle. Describe the grazing methods you have employed in the past to reduce invasive plants and the observed results. Describe additional measures or tools that you have implemented to control invasive plants and the observed results. **(2 page maximum)**

iii. Describe your approach to monitoring grazing on rangelands. Include examples of previous rangeland monitoring (e.g., Residual Dry Matter (RDM) clipping, photo monitoring, visual/ocular estimation, etc.). Describe previous monitoring outcomes and how that monitoring effort helped informed subsequent management. **(1 page maximum)**

iv. Describe your method for determining when pastures are ready to be grazed. Describe factors or environmental conditions that you consider when determining when cattle should be rotated between pastures or added/removed from the property. **(1 page maximum)**

v. Describe any additional monitoring you have utilized in your grazing operation and/or specialized training (water quality, aquatic habitats, forestry, soils, etc.) that would enhance your ability to monitor natural

resources and habitat on the property. **(1 page maximum)**

- vi. What is your experience with grazing management specifically for enhancing native and/or sensitive species habitat? **(1 page maximum)**

4. Operations & Employee Staffing

- a. Provide a detailed operational plan for how you anticipate managing the grazing units for which you are submitting a proposal **(4 page maximum)**. In particular, please:

- i. List the grazing unit(s) for which you are submitting a proposal;
- ii. Describe the class of cattle you expect to graze on the unit(s) and how that choice aligns with the requirements and constraints of the grazing unit(s) as you understand them;
- iii. Describe the timing, duration, and frequency of rotations of grazing that you expect to utilize and explain how that plan best achieves the natural resource management objectives of the unit(s) as you understand them;
- iv. If applying for multiple grazing units, **list in order of preference the grazing units for which you are applying (no more than three (3))**. Describe how combining the management of those units best achieves your livestock operational goals **and** District natural resource management objectives. Please also address your willingness to accept fewer unit(s) should you not be chosen as the operator for all grazing units that you apply for.

- b. Provide a detailed description of your operational employee staffing **(3 page maximum)**. In particular, please:

- i. List all key personnel and employees involved in your livestock operation, including:
 - 1. Job title
 - 2. Job description
 - 3. Years of experience, and
 - 4. Area(s) of expertise

Include relevant certifications, education, and specialized training if applicable. Indicate who the main point of contact will be for day-to-day operations and describe best methods for contact and availability;

- ii. Describe the need for site presence and how often you and/or employee(s) plan to be on the property. Indicate your expected presence on the property as it may vary by season (calving, shipping, construction, etc.);

- iii. It is extremely important that the livestock operator or employees have the capacity to respond to an emergency (livestock/human conflict, sick or injured livestock, cattle on a roadway, etc.) in a reasonable amount of time. Describe the availability and expected response time (minimum and maximum response time) of the operator or employees of the operator, in the event of an emergency;
- iv. Describe how you plan to work with the District's Conservation Grazing Program Manager to determine range readiness, shipping dates, changes in stocking rate, and pasture rotations? What is your preferred method(s) of communication?
- v. Have you ever worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, local Resource Conservation District, or applied for grant funds to assist in infrastructure improvements relevant to your livestock operation? Do you plan to utilize these services to assist with improvements on District property or would you consider these services as an option?

5. Alignment with District Agricultural Policy elements (adopted November 2023)

- a. Describe how your proposal furthers District policy goals on Environmental Sustainability; in particular, please answer the following questions: **(2 page maximum)**
 - i. How do you reduce non-renewable energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in your operation (solar pumps, vehicle use, etc.)?
 - ii. What are some examples of how you have worked with water systems to reduce reliance on and impact to streams or other sensitive habitats?
 - iii. What are your contingency plans for dealing with drought?
 - iv. How do you manage a grazing lease to increase carbon storage on the landscape (soils and vegetation).
- b. We encourage applicants that prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts and address systemic barriers to access and equity. We are particularly interested in partnering with operators that either currently have DEI initiatives in place or are working to establish DEI initiatives, such as:
 - Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organization and programs (examples include ownership by groups that have been historically underrepresented in ranching or hiring from diverse candidate pools).

- Addressing disparities and inequities in access to resources and opportunities (examples include working to ensure good access in local communities or establishing mentorship programs for underrepresented populations).
- Collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including communities that have been historically marginalized (examples include partnerships with local food organizations, or businesses owned by people from historically underrepresented communities).

Describe how your proposal furthers District policy goals on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. You may also describe plans or goals around DEI initiatives if no current programs are established. **(1 page maximum)**

- c. Describe how your proposal furthers District policy goals on community outreach, education, and supporting local food systems **(1 page maximum)**.
- d. Identify your business and residential address, if you have business operations in San Mateo County identify the location of those business operations. **(1 paragraph maximum)**;
- e. Are you a current or former a grazing tenant with the District? If yes, describe how long you have been a tenant and on what properties. **(1 paragraph maximum)**.



ATTACHMENT C

Grazing Lease Agreement

(to be downloaded separately)