

Request for Proposals: Livestock Operator Leases on District Conservation Grazing Lands
Questions and Answers
March 28, 2025

1. Q. Will a proposer be awarded multiple units? Or is the District aiming to spread awards across multiple proposers?

A. As stated on Page 10 of the RFP document, an award of Grazing Unit(s) will generally be recommended to the highest-ranking Proposer(s) for each Grazing Unit. If a single proposer is the highest-ranking proposer for multiple units, the District may assign the proposer those units. However, the District has the discretion, when balancing overall grazing program goals, to *not* assign a proposer multiple Grazing Units even if they are the highest-scoring proposer on those units. The District cannot say at this time if the District will exercise that option. The District will decide as part of the selection process after proposals are received and scored.

2. Q. Does the District consider brush management to be a requirement of the grazing tenant? Will the tenant be compensated for brush management?

A. Please reference “Exhibit D – Rangeland Mngmnt. Activities and Responsibilities” (page 29 of 36 of the PDF “Attachment C. Grazing Lease Agreement” found on the District website). Brush management would be considered a “Conservation Service” (Section C, Sub-section 3 of Table): “Control of invasive plant, reduction of fire hazards, and other special resource projects...” Accordingly, brush management is not a *requirement* of the grazing tenant, i.e. it is not a “standard lease term;” instead, it is an optional activity performed at the sole discretion of the District. If the District authorizes the grazing tenant to perform brush management, the grazing tenant would be compensated as a contractor for performing the work.

3. Q. Can a grazing tenant use a camper trailer on the Grazing Unit to facilitate management?

A. No, overnight stays on the Grazing Units are not allowed.

4. Q. Can the District provide actual stocking rates for recent years for the five Grazing Units included as part of this RFP?

A.

Grazing Unit	Rangeland Management Plan authorized stocking rate (AUMs)	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
Johnston Ranch	366	236	314
Lobitos	863	656	577
Harrington	2016	1813	1776
Butano	551	284	No data*
Cloverdale	1251	1030	No data*

*District assumed management in 2023

5. Q. Will the ten (10) points for tenant in good standing be automatically applied?

A. No. The tenant in good standing points will be applied on a scale of 0-5 points in two separate phases of the RFP process. In the first phase of the RFP (the written proposal), up to five points will be added to the proposal score based on previous tenant performance as documented in prior years' Performance Evaluations. For the second phase (the site visit), up to five points will be added to the site visit score, for existing tenants only, based on District's evaluation of the existing tenant's discussion of its history working with the District.

6. Q. If during the course of normal operations, assuming an operator is following all of the restrictions for working at Butano Farms and Cloverdale Ranch (e.g. 5mph speed limit, on road, etc.), a San Francisco Garter Snake (SFGS) is killed, will the grazing operator be expected to pay the fine levied by the federal government due to the unauthorized take of a federally endangered species?

A. When leasing District lands, a grazing operator's activities are covered by the District's permit coverage, so long as the operator is following lease conditions and property-specific special-status-species restrictions. Should the operator have an accidental take of an SFGS, or other protected species, while abiding by all applicable conditions and restrictions, that operator would not be expected to pay any fine associated with the unauthorized take. With that said, the grazing operator's lease would be re-evaluated if it was evident that the operator was not following site restrictions which resulted in the unauthorized take of a protected species.

7. Q. Would the District be willing to augment the working restriction to allow for off-road quad use less than 5pmh?

A. Yes, slow moving off-road quad use is acceptable. Requirements are to keep speed at or below 5mph and to only traverse open grassy areas that the driver can feasibly check for wildlife (i.e. don't drive over substantial, matted, or shrubby vegetation).

8. Q. Why is Butano Farms Grazing Unit offered for just a single, five-year term when the other Grazing Units are available for an initial five-year term with two additional five-year optional extensions?

A. The Rangeland Management Plan that was authored when the District assumed ownership/management over the larger Cloverdale Ranch property (which includes both the Butano Farm and Cloverdale Ranch Grazing Units) recommended that the two Grazing Units be combined to improve operations and management. While the District has decided not to combine the units for this RFP, it plans to reconsider combining Butano Farms and Cloverdale Ranch Grazing Units at the expiration of the first Butano Farms term. Therefore, only the initial five-year term is being offered for Butano Farms Grazing Unit at this time.

9. Q. Will one person be assigned to reviewing the whole proposal, or will multiple individuals be assigned to reading different sections of the proposal? We would like clarification on whether each section should be comprehensive over avoiding some repetition.

A. Each Selection Committee member will review all portions of each proposal. Therefore, there is no need to repeat information in different sections of a proposal.

10. Q. Section 3: It is requested that we include a current certificate of insurance covering the properties that we currently graze. Are these certificates going to be considered part of the page limitations for the section or should we include them as an appendix?

A. In order to satisfy Section 3.a.i.a, please include them as an appendix. The current certificate(s) of insurance will not count towards the page limitation for that section.

11. Q. The page limitation in Section 3.a.ii does not allow for a complete accounting of the infrastructural construction/improvements our operation has completed. Would it be better to go into more depth on a representative set of properties or go into less depth but cover all the projects on all properties? Can extra info be put in an appendix? Can infrastructure photos be put in an appendix?

A. The purpose of this section is to allow the proposer to communicate to the District their experience, expertise, and willingness to perform installation and maintenance of infrastructure typically found in a grazing operation. Towards that end, proposers are not expected to provide details on all infrastructure projects previously completed but should instead identify a representative set of projects or types of infrastructure work that the proposer feels best represents its capabilities and/or that are relevant to the particular infrastructure needs for the Grazing Unit(s) for which it is proposing. If desired, a proposer can include up to four (4) additional pages of photographs in the appendix. Photos in the appendix may include brief text below them to explain what is pictured but no further textual information may be included.

12. Q. Are photographs counted towards page limitations for sections? If yes, can we include a separate appendix for photos?

A. Yes, photographs are counted towards page limitation for sections. Besides the allowance to include an appendix with infrastructure photographs (see previous question and answer), no further photographs can be included in an appendix.

13. Q. Financial Statement: Will a certified letter from our banking institution serve as written evidence as our certified statement of financial condition?

A. Please refer to Section 2.c. of Attachment 2 of the RFP. Evidence of the proposer's financial condition should be in the form of a certified financial report or a certified statement of financial condition that shows both the proposer's assets and liabilities. The financial statement must be signed by either the proposer's certified public accountant or an officer of the proposer's company (*e.g.*, CEO, CFO, finance manager, sole proprietor, etc.) who can certify that the information is true and correct. The District will consider alternative materials on a case-by-case basis, as long as the materials show the proposer's overall financial condition. The District may request additional information from a proposer if

submitted financial information is inadequate.

14. Q. In addition to listing references, are reference letters acceptable? And should we put those letters in an appendix?

A. No, including reference letters is not acceptable. Providing references and reference contact information is all that is required.

15. Q. Can two individuals who attended the February 20th mandatory meeting form a partnership and submit a joint proposal?

A. Yes. Two or more individuals/sole proprietors may submit a proposal as a single operation. Please, however, refer to Section 2.c of the “RFP Required Elements and Format for Submission” (Page 22 of 29 in the RFP PDF). Note that if the individuals do not form a separate *legal* entity for the operator, a separate financial statement will be required for each person in the operation. An individual may not, however, submit multiple proposals using separate legal entities or as a co-owner of multiple operations in combination with different individuals. The District will consider each operator’s ownership structure in determining whether an individual has submitted multiple proposals.

16. Q. Would District allow for a 6-month extension for cow/calf operations on current leases, in the event they are not awarded new leases?

A. No, the District cannot extend current leases because the new leases being awarded in this RFP process commence immediately upon the expiration of the current lease (i.e., October 31st). Therefore, extending a current lease would interfere with the new lessee’s occupancy of the Grazing Unit. Given the variety of operations that our District tenants have (e.g. spring-calving cow/calf, fall-calving cow/calf, direct-to-consumer, seasonal stocking) there is no single date that might minimize impacts to an outgoing operator. Operators are expected to adjust their operations to account for the established lease term.

17. Q. How do grazing tenants get compensated for ranch infrastructure and vegetation management projects?

A. For approved work that qualifies for grazing tenant compensation, the District enters into contract with the grazing tenant. In any one fiscal year, the District is able to contract with the grazing tenant for work costing up to the District’s General Manager’s signing authority, which is currently set at \$52,000. Contracts will be compensated as direct payments to grazing tenants rather than as a rent credit. Given this procedure, it should be noted that should grazing tenants have employees, grazing tenants are expected to pay those employees prevailing wage and to carry worker’s compensation insurance.

18. Q. Is it acceptable to graze with multiple livestock species and/or species other than cattle?

A. Proposers responding to this RFP may only apply as cattle operators. With that said, the District is interested in utilizing other species (especially sheep and/or goats) to achieve specific ecological outcomes. Should a cattle operator also have access to other species of livestock, they may indicate as much in their proposal and may describe methods by which species alternative to cattle could benefit the natural resource outcomes of the Grazing Unit(s) to which they are proposing.