



## COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

### SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 6/3/2025

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Public Infrastructure

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Johannes J. Hoevertsz, SPI, 707-565-2550

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisory District(s):** Second

**Title:**

License Agreement for 403 Mecham Road, Petaluma

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Authorize the Clerk of the Board to post a notice, declaring the Board's intent to enter into the proposed License Agreement with Licensee; and
- B) Authorize the Sonoma County Public Infrastructure Director to execute a License Agreement with Joseph P. Camozzi (Licensee), for use of County property comprised of approximately 123 acres, to conduct grazing operations for the term of three years, with two (2) one (1) year optional extensions at no charge; and
- C) Make a finding that no competitive bidding is required as the County is receiving value in-kind of less than \$10,000 per month, as the Licensee will provide vegetation management and maintenance of the cattle lane and fencing on the Premises, and the term of the proposed Agreement will not exceed 10 years.

(Second District)

**Executive Summary:**

The County owns certain property located at 403 Mecham Road, comprised of a 134.79-acre former ranch. The property was purchased in 1999 as a landfill buffer as it is situated across from the Central Disposal Site. Of this property, 3.14 acres are licensed to Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, which operates a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation facility; and approximately 200 square feet is leased to Crown Castle International Corporation for telecommunications.

Under the proposed Revocable License Agreement with Joseph P. Camozzi, the Licensee will be allowed to graze cattle on approximately 123 acres at no cost, for a term of three years, with two options to extend the agreement, each for one year. Licensee's grazing services provide valuable vegetation management, such as reducing weeds, preventing excessive fuel buildup, and maintaining short-grass conditions, while furthering the County's habitat conservation goals for the mitigation bank project. The Licensee will also be responsible for repair and maintenance of the cattle lane and fencing on the property.

**Discussion:**

The County owns and manages property at 403 Mecham Road, Petaluma, a former ranch, located in a rural area of Sonoma County, situated north of Petaluma and southwest of Cotati, directly across Mecham Road from the County's Central Disposal Site. The County acquired the property in mid-1999 for the purpose of landfill buffer. The land is an irregularly shaped, 134.79-acre parcel with topography ranging from moderately rolling to moderate-to-steep slope. (Please see map, Attachment 1.) Two portions of the property are currently occupied: one by Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue's facility and the other through a cellular lease with Crown Castle International Corporation. The remaining acreage has historically been licensed to Joseph P. Camozzi for cattle grazing. That License agreement's initial term, effective December 2019, was one-year with four optional one-year extensions, all of which were executed. The Agreement expired in December 2024 and all cattle were removed from the premises.

**Mitigation Bank.** Sonoma County Public Infrastructure is currently in the process of developing a mitigation bank on the grazed portions of this property, which relies on grazed landscapes to maintain suitable habitat, including ephemeral ponds for species such as the California tiger salamander.

By managing vegetation through grazing rather than mechanical or chemical methods, the County:

- Reduces Invasive Species: Cattle selectively graze on weeds and non-native grasses, slowing their spread.
- Mitigates Fire Risk: Lower grass heights and biomass diminish the potential fuel load in a fire-prone region.
- Maintains Short-Grass Conditions: These conditions are essential for supporting ephemeral ponds and upland foraging areas critical to amphibians, including the California tiger salamander.
- Saves Public Resources: The County avoids incurring costs for contracted weed abatement, which would otherwise require machinery or herbicides.
- Meets Ecological Goals: Sustainable grazing fosters healthier grasslands and helps fulfill regulatory requirements for wetland and habitat conservation within the mitigation bank.

**Proposed license.** The proposed License Agreement ("Agreement") covers specified portions of the land and comprises approximately 123 acres, excluding certain areas within that acreage utilized for the Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue facility and cellular site. The proposed Agreement is non-exclusive, allowing the County to access and use the land for environmental projects or other needs, with the option for either party to terminate on 60 days' notice. No rent on the land would be charged to Licensee; instead, the Licensee's vegetation management (grazing with up to 60 cattle) will reduce invasive species, mitigate fire risk, and maintain the short-grass conditions vital to a successful mitigation bank. By controlling the growth and density of non-native plants, grazing improves the overall quality of seasonal wetland habitats for amphibians such as the California tiger salamander, which require open, lightly vegetated breeding ponds and upland foraging

areas. This sustainable approach also reduces reliance on chemical herbicides and mechanical mowing, while fostering healthier grasslands that meet both ecological and regulatory goals for the County’s mitigation bank.

Section 25537 of the Government Code allows the County to enter into the license agreement with the Licensee, provided the Board makes the finding that the estimated monthly rental shall not exceed \$10,000, and the term of the Agreement shall not exceed 10 years. According to the terms of the Agreement, Licensee shall provide in-kind services that shall not exceed \$10,000 per month in lieu of rent. Licensee’s in-kind services shall reduce invasive species, mitigate fire risk, and maintain the short-grass conditions vital to a successful mitigation bank, improving the quality of seasonal wetland habitats for species such as the California tiger salamander, and others. Furthermore, the County has not identified an alternative use for the Premises during the term of the proposed Agreement with the Licensee.

Staff recommends the Board authorize the Clerk of the Board to post a notice, declaring the Board’s intent to enter into the proposed Agreement and authorize the Sonoma County Public Infrastructure Director to execute the Agreement.

**Strategic Plan:**

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

**Pillar:** Climate Action and Resiliency

**Goal:** Goal 5: Maximize opportunities for mitigation of climate change and adaptation through land conservation work and land use policies

**Objective:** Objective 1: Align the Board of Supervisor’s strategic priorities, policy, and operational goals with funding and resources.

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

11/12/2019 – Adopted an ordinance amending Chapter 2, Section 2-172 of the County Code, to extend for a period not to exceed 5 years, re-authorizing delegation of authority to certain Department Heads to execute leases and licenses valued at less than \$10,000/month and for a term up to 10 years, including renewals, for County-owned properties

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY24-25 Adopted</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0
Additional Appropriation Requested			

<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There are no direct fiscal impacts as a result of this Board Item.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None.

**Attachments:**

- 1 – Map
- 2 – Proposed License Agreement
- 3 – Notice of Intent

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

None.