



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 8/26/2025

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**To:** Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Misti Arias, General Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager, 707-565-7266  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Second Amendment to Agreement O-1465 Singing Streams Conservation Consultants Acquisition Strategy, Policy, and Transactions

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize the General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to execute a second amendment to an agreement with Singing Stream Conservation Consultants by adding \$150,000 to the total contract budget for a new total not to exceed \$450,000 with no change to the term, currently set to end June 30, 2026 with an option to extend for two additional years.

**Executive Summary:**

In July 2023, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) entered into a professional services agreement in the amount of \$150,000 over three years for land acquisition strategy, policy and transaction services related to acquisition of District conservation easement, transfer of fee lands to recreational partners, and completion of Community Spaces Matching Grant Projects. Contract tasks include negotiating with landowners; drafting acquisition, transfer, and grant agreements; conducting due diligence; coordinating appraisal work; and preparing grant applications for acquisition funding. Additional tasks include supporting District staff in developing strategies associated with proactive solicitation of conservation projects. This agreement was amended in July 2024 to add \$150,000 for additional high priority conservation easement work. The Scope of Work and contract term were not modified. However, the additional funds allowed Singing Stream Conservation Consultants to take on additional high priority projects. To address a need to provide progress and continuity on several acquisition projects, Ag + Open Space proposes to amend this agreement for a second time to add \$150,000 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$450,000.

**Discussion:**

Ag + Open Space is committed to protecting the highest priority working and natural lands through the acquisition and long-term stewardship of existing and future conservation easements and/or fee title properties.

The need for consultant assistance with land acquisition projects is due to the variable nature of the Acquisition Program workload. Further, as we have accelerated acquisition of the highest priority projects and move toward proactive conservation outreach, it is often difficult to predict or control the workload of the

Acquisition Program as critical opportunities often present themselves at unexpected times. Multiple projects may require simultaneous time-sensitive work. Therefore, a professional services agreement provides support when Acquisition Program staff do not have the capacity to react to these opportunities in a timely manner due to existing project workload. At the present, Singing Stream is working on six conservation easement acquisitions, including negotiating with landowners, providing support to Acquisition Specialists, and aiding in developing grant applications to leverage Ag + Open Space sales tax revenue. We are at a critical juncture with several projects and continuity of work is key to have a successful conservation outcome. Further, there are conservation opportunities on the horizon, where action may be needed and current workloads strain our capacity to take on new projects.

Staff at Singing Stream Conservation Consultants brings vast expertise in conservation easement transactions and land conservation strategy and policy. The principal is the former Vice President of Land Protection for the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit organization. During her tenure at TPL the organization completed 1700 land and water protection projects in 44 states. These projects protected 1.5 million acres valued at over \$4 billion and included partnerships with foundations, local, state, and federal agencies. For these reasons, Ag + Open Space selected Singing Stream in 2023 as a single source consultant for services as needed.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

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

No

N/A

**Prior Board Actions:**

July 18, 2023: Approval of Agreement with Singing Stream Conservation Consulting for Acquisition Strategy, Policy, and Transactions.

July 16, 2024: Approval of first amendment to Agreement with Singing Stream Conservation Consulting for Acquisition Strategy, Policy, and Transactions.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 25-26 Adopted</b>	<b>FY 26-27 Projected</b>	<b>FY 27-28 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$150,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	\$150,000		
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$150,000		
Use of Fund Balance			

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Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	\$150,000		

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

This amount is appropriated in the Ag + Open Space FY 25/26 budget.

<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):**

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**Attachments:**

1. Second Amendment to Agreement with Singing Stream Conservation Consultants

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

N/A