



SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 9/28/2021

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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:** Monica Delmartini, 565-7260  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisorial District(s):** First District

**Title:**

Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve Services Agreement for Vegetative Fuels Management

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize the General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to execute an agreement for tree thinning services for fuel reduction and shaded fuel break creation not to exceed \$319,800, effective for three years ending on September 28, 2024.

(First District)

**Executive Summary:**

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District owns the 960-acre Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve near northeast Santa Rosa. Prior to the 2020 Glass Fire, the Preserve's forest habitats had become encroached by Douglas-fir and understory fuel buildup. The Glass Fire left most of this understory material dead, dry, and available to burn at a higher intensity in a future fire. Ag + Open Space has worked with a team of expert consultants to develop a thinning plan for these at-risk stands and a shaded fuel break plan to strengthen defensibility along two Preserve roads. A grant from the State Coastal Conservancy will fund the entirety of the project.

Contractor services are required to complete fuel reduction activities. A service provider was selected pursuant to a Request for Proposals process.

**Discussion:**

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag + Open Space) is committed to implementing fuel reduction measures on Ag + Open Space-owned properties in an efficient and timely manner. In 2019, Ag + Open Space completed the Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve (Preserve) Management Plan and associated Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, which identified fuel reduction as a key priority for the stewardship of the preserve. In 2020, Ag + Open Space worked with Registered Professional Foresters, Cal Fire, a prescribed fire specialist, and a Wappo Tribal representative to develop prescriptions for shaded fuel breaks and targeted understory thinning as well as a prescribed fire plan for a portion of the preserve's forests.

Shaded fuel break and initial forest thinning work was intended to begin in 2020 but was delayed by the Covid-

19 pandemic and the September 2020 Glass Fire, which burned the majority of the preserve at varying levels of severity. The patchy nature of these fire effects left extensive standing dead material in the forest understory, which could contribute to more severe fire behavior and fire effects in both future prescribed burn and wildfire scenarios.

In 2021, Ag + Open Space was awarded a \$661,250 grant from the State Coastal Conservancy to implement approximately 60 acres of understory thinning, a 1-mile-long shaded fuel break along the Erland-Cleland Tie Road, and a 0.5-mile shaded fuel break along Plum Ranch Road.

Ag + Open Space proposes a three-year service agreement (on file with the Clerk of the Board) with Hanford Applied Restoration & Conservation for forest thinning services totaling \$319,800, effective for three years ending on September 28, 2024.

Hanford Applied Restoration & Conservation was selected based on their ability to provide forest thinning and shaded fuel break creation services within an ideal timeframe, and proposed the lowest cost of service. □

**Competitive Selection Process**

On 08/02/2021, Ag + Open Space released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify and screen qualified contractors for prescribed grazing services. The RFP was sent to 551 suppliers registered in the County of Sonoma Supplier Portal, 2,309 subscribers to the County of Sonoma’s govdelivery.com RFP email list, and 48 supplier email addresses provided by Ag + Open Space. The RFP was advertised on the Ag + Open Space website and the County Purchasing website. A total of 3 entities submitted proposals for this RFP. Using a set of selection criteria, an evaluation committee comprised of internal staff independently reviewed both of the proposals, scored each according to the pre-established criteria, and selected the vendor most capable of providing the identified services. Hanford Applied Restoration & Conservation submitted a responsive proposal that clearly addressed the needs of the Ag + Open Space and thoughtfully responded to the elements described in the RFP. Hanford Applied Restoration & Conservation also offered the lowest cost of service as amongst the proposers deemed qualified to perform the work.

**Local Preference, Local Experience**

The selected firm is located in Sonoma County, and has significant experience working in the Sonoma County community.

**Prior Board Actions:**

August 17, 2021: Reso 21-0317 Authorize District General Manager to execute grant from State Coastal Conservancy Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience Program

September 24, 2019: Reso 19-0406 Adoption of Saddle Mountain Management Plan, Initial Study, and Mitigated Negative Declaration

January 10, 2006: Reso 06-0041 Approve fee title acquisition of 960-acre Saddle Mountain property for a total price of \$9,213,000.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Projected</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Projected</b>

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Budgeted Expenses	\$269,800	\$50,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$269,800</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$269,800	\$50,000	
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$269,800</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

A grant from the State Coastal Conservancy, approved by the Board on August 17, 2021, will fund this project.

<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):**

**Attachments:**

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

1. Professional Service Agreement with Hanford Applied Restoration and Conservation
2. Project Area Map