



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: June 27, 2023

Subject Authorization for execution of agreement with Grassroots Ecology for Redwood Grove Stewardship services

Prepared by: Manny A. Hernandez, Parks & Recreation Director

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

1. Resolution
2. Grassroots Ecology Letter and Scope of Work Summary

Initiated by:

Staff

Previous Council Consideration:

None

Fiscal Impact:

The following action will cost \$191,000 for contracted stewardship services in the Redwood Grove Nature preserve.

- Breakdown of funds to be used:
 - o \$191,000 General Fund
- Amount already included in approved budget: Y
- Amount above budget requested: 0

Environmental Review:

The approval of this agreement with Grassroots Ecology is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) in that the only work required under the agreement is limited to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, and none of the circumstances identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies.

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

City Manager

GE

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JD



Subject: Title

- None

Summary:

- This agreement is for a contracted steward to manage/restore Redwood Grove nature preserve.
- The agreement is with Grassroots ecology for two years with an option for three additional years.
- Grassroots Ecology has been providing satisfactory stewardship services for the last five years and as Acterra previous to 2018.

Staff Recommendation:

Authorize the City Manager to execute an amendment to the agreement with Grassroots Ecology in the total amount of \$191,000 for a two-year term (\$95,500 per year) to manage and restore Redwood Grove Nature Preserve.

Purpose

Authorize the City Manager to execute an amendment to an agreement on behalf of the city with Grassroots Ecology in the total amount of \$233,130 for continued stewardship in managing and performing restoration of the open space known as Redwood Grove.

Background

The City of Los Altos owns Redwood Grove Nature Preserve; 5.7-acre nature preserve located off University Avenue. The City has contracted with Grassroots Ecology to assist in preserving and maintaining this valuable community asset. The term of the previous contract with Grassroots expires on July 1, 2023.

The stewardship that Grassroots Ecology provides as part of their scope of work for this agreement includes important aspects of care for Redwood Grove. Here are a few very important items that Grassroots staff and volunteers take care of in Redwood Grove.

In the late spring and early summer, Grassroots Ecology removes invasive weeds through scything or hand-pulling. Left unattended to, these weeds would not only become unsightly, but would increase the fire hazard in the area. Removing these weeds without chemicals is very time consuming and could not be handled by staff at this time.

Grassroots has transplanted native plants to the area and they require attention when initially planted for the root system to gain a foothold. There is not an automatic irrigation system in the area to provide the water and care needed. Grassroots has provided attention and plan to continue to provide that attention. Additional native plantings, that Grassroots Ecology would install, are also planned in the future through matching grants that are secured by them.



Subject: Title

The health of the redwood trees in the nature preserve is also something that Grassroots staff and volunteers assist the City with. The redwood trees undergo intense stress during the hot dry summers, as they were planted over 100 years ago out of their natural range (the coastal fog belt). As a result, this natural asset relies on continued irrigation utilizing specialized watering machinery that is set up by Grassroots Ecology staff. Without regular watering in the summer, the redwoods could suffer significant strain in health, which could contribute to their unhealthy appearance and create limb hazards.

Discussion/Analysis

Parks Maintenance staff works with the stewardship services contractor on the care and maintenance of Redwood Grove and has found success working with Grassroots Ecology in recent years. City crews do not have the expertise and are not staffed at a level that can provide the maintenance a contract steward can for the nature preserve. Grassroots Ecology has also provided expert advice on other items within the nature preserve that city staff maintains.

On May 17, 2023, the City of Los Altos requested proposals for stewardship services for Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. Proposals were due on Thursday, June 15. Only one proposal was received, from Grassroots Ecology. Staff feels the submitted proposal of \$95,500 annually for stewardship services is reasonable and responsive for the scope of work.

This agreement is to authorize a new contract with Grassroots Ecology for two years for contracted stewardship services in Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. The amount for Grassroots Ecology's work in fiscal year 23/24 is already budgeted in the Parks & Recreation Department operating budget. The total amount that will need to be budgeted over the two-year agreement is \$191,000.

Recommendation

Authorize the City Manager to execute an amendment to the agreement with Grassroots Ecology in the total amount of \$191,000 for a two-year term (\$95,500 per year) to manage and restore Redwood Grove Nature Preserve.