



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Watershed Committee/Board of Directors
Title: Forestry Services Contract (CN 2034)
From: Shaun Horne, Director of Watershed Resources
Through: Ben Horenstein, General Manager
Meeting Date: June 20, 2024

TYPE OF ACTION: Action Information X Review and Refer

RECOMMENDATION: Review and refer the ‘Forestry Services’ General Services Agreement (GSA) to a future regular meeting of the Board of Directors for award of the contract to the lowest qualified bidder

SUMMARY: The District is currently in year five of implementation of the Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) that was adopted in 2019. The current forestry contract with Hanford ARC (CN 1938) will terminate of June 30, 2024. Staff proposes using a new three year ‘Forestry Services’ GSA contract to provide labor and equipment necessary to further implement treatments outlined in the BFFIP vegetation management actions. Assuming satisfactory contractor performance during the initial contract term, the GSA contract allows for two one-year contract extensions.

Staff recommends that the Watershed Committee review and refer the Forestry Services GSA contract for award to the lowest qualified bidder at a future regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting, and to authorize the General Manager to execute any and all future amendments to this contract, which are deemed necessary, so long as they do not exceed 10% of the total contract amount.

DISCUSSION: In October of 2019, the District adopted the BFFIP, and associated Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), which describes the actions the District will implement to reduce wildfire hazards and to maintain and enhance ecosystem function. Vegetation management under the BFFIP aims to reduce fuel loads, maintain fuelbreak infrastructure, preserve defensible space, and reduce invasive weed species. Vegetation management is conducted continuously throughout the year with the chief goal of reducing fuel loads and maintaining the watershed’s biological diversity. These actions help to protect the District’s primary source of water supply, the Mt. Tam Watershed.

Over the last four years Hanford ARC has successfully assisted the District under contract CN1938 with implementation of BFFIP vegetation management actions. On June 30, 2024, contract CN1938 will expire and the District will need to seek bids on a new forestry contract in order to continue critical

BFFIP implementation. The District utilizes various contractors and crews from partnering agencies to carry out the BFFIP annual vegetation management actions on the watershed. The BFFIP work is funded with District Operations and Capital budgets and with grants from Cal Fire and the Wildlife Conservation Board. To reduce financial impacts to ratepayers, the District continues to seek out additional state and federal funding to support the scaling up of the BFFIP work on the watershed.

For the past five years, watershed staff and contractors have successfully implemented vegetation management actions (MA) outlined within the BFFIP. Multiple contractors are necessary to conduct over 1,500 acres of annual vegetation treatments described in the BFFIP under MA-20, 'Fuelbreak Construction', MA-21 Fuelbreak Construction, MA-23, 'Forest Stand Structure Improvement' and MA 24, 'Grassland and Oak Woodland Improvement'. This new Forestry GSA will provide skilled hands and operator labor, as well as heavy equipment with forestry masticators, necessary to continue planned BFFIP MAs through 2027, with the option to extend the contract for two additional years in one year increments.

In addition, this new Forestry Services contract will support a limited amount of vegetation related work needed during implementation of the current 'Lagunitas Creek Restoration Project' which is now underway.

Proposal Selection Process

In June 2024, the District will release a notice inviting bidders to submit proposals for a three-year Forestry Services GSA. The notice will be published in the local newspaper and posted on the District's external bid posting website to inform contractors of the opportunity. Bids will be received and reviewed by the District and the lowest qualified bidder will be identified.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The District, as the Lead Agency on this project, has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act for the Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP) which was adopted in 2019 and covers all work being proposed under the new 'Forestry Services' contract.

FISCAL IMPACT: Staff estimate the costs to perform the 'Forestry Services' work over three years, during FY25, FY26 & FY27, will total approximately \$4,070,985. Funds for this contract will be paid out of a combination of District BFFIP Operations and Capital funding, as well as a secured Wildlife Conservation Board Grant and Cal Fire Forest Health Grant.

ATTACHMENT(S): None.