

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**DATE:** September 6, 2023  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Jake Smith, Planning & Conservation Program Manager  
**REVIEWED BY:** Lew Bauman, Interim General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Contract with SWCA Inc. for the Development of a Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park

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**SUMMARY:**

Staff are requesting that the Board authorize and direct the Interim General Manager to negotiate and enter into a contract with an environmental consulting firm for the development of a Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The cost of developing the Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan is estimated to not-to-exceed \$141,419. The scope and cost of staffing and implementing the plan over the next 20 to 30 years will be determined as a part of the plan development process.

**FUNDING SOURCE:**

6794 Professional Contract Services

**FUNDING BALANCE:**

\$1,110,105 as of the writing of this report

**BACKGROUND:**

California Red-legged frog (*Rana Draytonii*), a species that is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), resides in areas of Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park. Under Section 9 of the ESA, it is unlawful to “take” CRLF, where ESA interprets “take” to include activities that could harm covered species. Staff wish to pursue development of a Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan (LEHCP) to permit Park activities with minor or negligible effects on CRLF in exchange for MPRPD implementing additional conservation measures, ongoing monitoring and reporting, and adaptive management measures. Staff believe that pursuing a LEHCP is necessary to provide assurances that CRLF populations at the Park remain well-managed while also ensuring that Park operations, maintenance activities, and Projects are able to efficiently proceed without violating the ESA. Development of the LEHCP is expected to require significant effort over the next 12 months and staff released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for LEHCP Development Services to secure an environmental consultant firm to support its development.

**DISCUSSION:**

On August 17, 2023, a RFP for Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan Development Services (**ATTACHMENT 1**) was emailed to four (4) qualified firms. Three (3) proposals

were received by the formal response deadline of August 22, 2023, with the proposed levels of effort, and associated contract amounts listed in the table below:

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Team Members</b>	<b>Estimated Hours</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Average \$/hr</b>
Denise Duffy & Associates	3	394	\$ 60,072	\$152.46
GEI Inc.	5	403	\$ 89,047	\$220.96
SWCA Inc.	5	652	\$ 140,418	\$215.37

The proposals were reviewed and scored against the criteria set forth in the RFP, which generally included: quality of proposal, implementation approach, and firm qualifications. Based on evaluation according to these criteria, all three firms are qualified, however the SWCA Inc proposed project team (**ATTACHMENT 2**) was determined by staff to be the best fit for this challenging assignment. In their proposal SWCA provided their best estimate of the amount of time that could be required to develop and negotiate a LEHCP between the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service, while also including additional time to coordinate and build consensus with Wedgewood Weddings, MPRPD’s concessionaire, and the Santa Lucia Conservancy, which holds and educational easement over a portion of the property.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommend that the Board authorize the Interim General Manger to negotiate with SWCA Inc, to enter into contract (**ATTACHMENT 3**) to support the development of a Low-effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rancho Cañada Unit of Palo Corona Regional Park on a reimbursable time and material basis not to exceed \$141,419.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. [Request for Proposal](#)
2. [Proposal](#)
3. [Professional Services Agreement](#)