



January 27, 2009

Board of Directors
Marin County Open Space District
Marin County Civic Center
San Rafael, California 94903

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE
AGREEMENT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATES
IN THE AMOUNT OF \$298,585 FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A
VEGETATION AND BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize President to execute the Professional Services Agreement with Environmental Science Associates in the amount of \$298,585.

SUMMARY: The Board's approval of the attached agreement would permit the development of the Marin County Open Space District's first ever Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan. The creation of such a plan would be a milestone in the District's ongoing efforts to improve stewardship of its lands, and the first step toward developing a comprehensive Resource Management Plan that addresses resource protection in the District's entire 15,500-acre open space system. A Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan would enable well informed decision making by District land managers with regard to:

- Conservation, enhancement, and restoration of native plant communities
- Preservation and protection of special status species populations and their habitats
- Protection of biodiversity to achieve a high representation of native plants and animals
- Control and reduction of non-native plant populations
- Reduction of wildland fire hazard

The process of developing the Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan would include:

- Background research to establish the benefits and challenges associated with managing for biodiversity,

- An assessment of regional trends and practices in vegetation and biodiversity management,
- Establishment of goals and objectives
- Development of biodiversity and vegetation management strategies for plant communities present on District lands
- Establishment of performance measures and monitoring protocols to enable adaptive management.

Development of the plan would be a collaborative process involving staff, consultants, and representatives of other agencies including the Marin County Fire Department, other local fire agencies, and the Marin Municipal Water District.

Because of the significance of this plan to communities in the wildland-urban interface, the scope of services includes multiple opportunities for public and stakeholder input. The District will also use its website to educate the public and provide a vehicle for review of draft documents. Staff will work with the consultant to design and execute effective public meetings to educate participants, solicit input, present preliminary conclusions, and present the draft plan.

Staff anticipates Board consideration of the final plan no later than November 2009.

FISCAL IMPACT: The expenditure for this project is an investment in good land stewardship and community fire safety. The Open Space District's current budget contains sufficient funding for the project.

REVIEWED BY:	<input type="checkbox"/> Auditor-Controller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Counsel	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Planning and Resources Chief Elise Holland is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Miska
Deputy Director

c: Matt Bronson
Yvonne Zupkow
Parks and Open Space Commission
Press