




**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	May 21, 2024
TITLE	Authorization to Amend a Contract with AECOM Technical Services to Increase the Contracted Amount by \$470,000 for Biological Monitoring and Reporting Support for the Implementation of the Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan: District-wide
DIVISION	Acquisition, Stewardship, and Development
FROM	Matt Graul, Chief of Stewardship Ken Wysocki, Assistant General Manager of Acquisition, Stewardship and Development
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends that the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) authorize an amendment to a contract with AECOM Technical Services (AECOM) to provide biological monitoring and assessment for the Park District's Fuels Management Program. Due to the increasing scale of fuels management in areas of tree dieback and drought stress, and increased staffing in the Fire Department for fuels reduction projects, the demand for biological monitoring has been larger than the amount previously estimated and approved. Additionally, Fire Department and Stewardship staff would also like to assess the impacts of biochar applications in fuels treatment areas.

This action would increase the current contracted amount from \$1,620,000 to \$2,090,000, an increase of \$470,000, for compliance coverage through December 31, 2025. Biological monitoring and assessment is required by environmental permits for the Park District's Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan (WHRRMP), as well as other fuels management projects. The WHRRMP project area includes the following locations: Point Pinole Regional Park, Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, Sobrante Ridge Botanic Regional Preserve, Kennedy Grove Regional Recreation Area, Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve, Robert Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve, Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve, Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park, Leona Canyon Regional Preserve, Anthony Chabot Regional Park, Lake Chabot Regional Park, and Tilden Regional Park.

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the Park District completed the WHRRMP and certified an Environmental Impact Report in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. In 2023, the Park District Board of Directors adopted the East Bay Hills Vegetation Treatment Project Project-Specific Analysis (PSA) under the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) certifying the addition of 2,400 acres of planned fuels management project area.

In early 2015, in preparation for implementing fuels management work in brushland areas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) completed an Environmental Impact Statement and secured a Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In 2018, the Park District acquired an Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) that authorized the implementation of the project. Pursuant to these state and federal permits, the Park District is required to adhere to biological monitoring requirements during project work, subject to quarterly and annual review by USFWS and CDFW.

For the past decade, the Park District has retained consultants to provide biological monitoring support for fuels management work, including daily monitoring by biologists, ensuring permit compliance, and completing pre- and post-project assessments as required by USFWS and CDFW. (See Board Resolution No. 2010-4-103, April 20, 2010) This collaborative relationship between the Park District's Fire Department, Stewardship staff, and independent biological monitors has resulted in effective, efficient, and environmentally compliant projects.

To meet permit requirements for biological monitoring of vegetation clearing for fuels management, multiple biologists at a time are often required at different sites to meet assessment and monitoring needs. Because the Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Permit require biological monitors to have species-specific training and approvals for three Covered Species, and because multiple projects are often being conducted simultaneously, a large team of approved biologists is needed to be able to meet compliance requirements. Retaining an on-call firm is the most cost-effective method of meeting requirements and maintaining compliance.

The Park District issued a request for proposals for environmental compliance for fuels reduction work in June of 2020 and AECOM was selected as the best qualified to perform the work. On April 20, 2020, the board authorized contracting with AECOM by Board Resolution No. 2020-12-193 for a one-year contract in the amount of \$412,000. The resolution authorized an option to renew annually for up to five years.

In order to meet the demands for additional fuel reduction projects, on October 4, 2022, by Board Resolution 2022-10-251, the Park District authorized a new contract with AECOM for biological monitoring for the three remaining years, to 2025, with total contract amount of \$1,620,000.

This action will increase the amount of the contract to maintain compliance with environmental conditions required by regulatory permits. Staff recommends that the amount of the current contract be increased by \$470,000, to \$2,090,000 to maintain compliance for the remainder of 2024 and 2025. This increase will cover recently identified priority fuel management projects and includes funding for a soil study to determine the effects of biochar on soils in fuels treatment areas.

ANALYSIS

Biological monitoring and assessment are mandated by the environmental permits associated with the WHRRMP and VTP PSA. Due to the increasing need for vegetation and fuels management on Park District lands and the need to conduct a biochar soil study, an amendment is required to the existing three-year contract for biological monitoring services to support the implementation of vegetation fuel reduction projects. This action will increase the current contracted amount of \$1,620,000 by \$470,000 to \$2,090,000 for AECOM to support the implementation of fuels reduction projects. An increase of \$470,000 to the total contract is proposed to ensure capacity is available to maintain regulatory compliance and fund the biochar soil study. Funds are currently available for this action as indicated below.

FISCAL IMPACT

Fuels & Fire Management Program (No. 550000) funds have covered this AECOM contract since 2023. This program consists of funds from federal, state, and local sources, grants, CalFIRE, Cal Recycle, Measure CC, Measure FF, General Fund, and other sources for this program and has been ongoing since 2007.

SOURCE OF FUNDS	
Fuels Management (No. 550000)	\$ 15,955,778
Encumbrances and Expenditures to Date	(12,750,614)
Total Funds Available	\$ 3,205,164

ATTACHMENTS

- I. WHRRMP & VTP Permitted Fuels Management Areas Map



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 2024 – 05 -
MAY 21, 2024**

**AUTHORIZATION TO AMEND A CONTRACT WITH AECOM TECHNICAL
SERVICES TO INCREASE THE CONTRACTED AMOUNT BY \$470,000 FOR
BIOLOGICAL MONITORING AND REPORTING SUPPORT FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WILDFIRE HAZARD REDUCTION AND RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN: DISTRICT-WIDE**

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2010, by Resolution No. 2010-4-104, the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) approved the Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan (WHRMP); and

WHEREAS, on July 18, 2023, by Resolution No. 2023-07-176, the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) approved and certified the East Bay Hills Vegetation Treatment Project Project-Specific Analysis and Addendum to the California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report, adding 2,400 new acres to the Park District's Fuels Management Program; and

WHEREAS, to implement the WHRMP and East Bay Hills Vegetation Treatment Project and comply with requirements from US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Park District is required to adhere to environmental compliance requirements during project work, pursuant to permits from USFWS and CDFW; and

WHEREAS, in June 2020, the Park District issued a request for proposals for environmental compliance for fuels reduction work, and AECOM was selected as the best qualified firm to perform the work; and

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2020, the board authorized contracting with AECOM by Board Resolution No. 2020-12-193 for a one-year contract in the amount of \$412,000. The resolution authorized an option to renew annually up to five years; and

WHEREAS, on October 4, 2022, by Board Resolution 2022-10-251, the Park District contracted with AECOM for biological monitoring for the three remaining years, to 2025, for a total contract amount of \$1,620,000 to increase the number of fuels reduction projects; and

WHEREAS, due to increasing demand to implement fuels management, addition of 2,400 of new permitted fuels management acreage, and increased staffing in the Fire Department for fuels reduction projects, the demand for biological monitoring has been larger than the amount previously estimated and approved; and

WHEREAS, to meet the demand for environmental compliance for the increased scope of the fuels management program, staff recommends that the contract with AECOM be increased by \$470,000, from \$1,620,000 to \$2,090,000;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District hereby authorizes the contract for professional services with AECOM Technical Services be increased by \$470,000 to a total contract value of \$2,090,000 to be spent over the next two years and paid out of funds from Fuels & Fire Management Program (No. 550000) and other sources as confirmed and available to projects, as presented to the Board on May 21, 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Manager is hereby authorized and directed, on behalf of the Park District and in its name, to execute and deliver such documents and to do such acts as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to accomplish the intentions of this resolution.

Moved by Director _____, and seconded by Director _____, and adopted May 21, 2024, by the following vote:

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: