

## Memorandum

Date: June 17, 2021  
To: Board of Directors  
From: Kellyx Nelson  
Re: Recommendation to contract with *Alnus* Ecological for Senior Technical Director services

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RCD staff recommends contracting *Alnus* Ecological (*Alnus*) for an amount not to \$300,000 over three years for Senior Technical Director services to assist the RCD in development and implementation of conservation programs and projects as well as strategies to implement the RCD's conservation mission. Technical assistance and advisory services required by the RCD under this role include:

- Strategic project and program development support to the Executive Director. This includes attending and participating in meetings with partners or potential partners, providing technical support in grant writing and funding strategies, as well as strategic planning. The contractor will also help integrate San Mateo RCD efforts with key strategic local and regional conservation and funding efforts, as well as leveraging lessons learned from innovations outside of San Mateo County into cohesive local and regional strategies for increasing the San Mateo RCD and other RCDs' effectiveness.
- As-needed program or project-specific or general technical support, mentorship, and training for RCD staff in terms of biological resources, water resources, ecosystem ecology, habitat restoration, engineering design review, construction techniques, project management and permit/regulatory compliance.
- Consultation to support critical tasks of RCD projects, which could include development of permit/compliance strategies, drafting or review of technical work programs and procurement/solicitation documents, preparation or review of technical studies and documents, and support facilitating technical advisory committees.
- Participation and attendance at RCD Board Meetings, RCD Staff Meetings, and other RCD meetings or convenings as needed.

The Public Contract Bidding, Vendor and Professional Consultant Selection, and Purchasing Policy adopted by this Board of Directors on March 20, 2014 requires solicitation of formal advertised bids for expenditures exceeding \$50,000. The policy allows exceptions to standard purchasing procedures in some circumstances, including when "services are of a unique type, are of a proprietary nature, or are

otherwise of such a required and specific design or construction, or are specifically necessary for purposes of maintaining cost effective system consistency, so as to be available from only one source.”

The proposed contract meets this criterion because of *Alnus*'s unique combination of expertise and experience. *Alnus* has been providing services as a senior technical advisor to the RCD since being approved by the RCD Board of Directors in October 2016 after a public solicitation process to identify a group of qualified and cost-competitive firms for these services. The firm's capacity to provide the desired suite of technical and advisory services uniquely relies on all of the following:

- As sole proprietor of *Alnus*, Jim Robins provides high level comprehensive, integrated technical assistance in a single advisor. For the proposed work, this is preferable to coordinating across multiple individuals within a firm offering different areas of expertise.
- Mr. Robins offers breadth and depth with broadly relevant technical expertise and applied on-the-ground experience specific to RCDs and to natural resource conservation within San Mateo County, the region, and the state. This includes biological services and special permits for handling protected species; permitting and environmental compliance and strategy; restoration ecology; landscape-scale planning; convening, managing, and facilitating advisory groups and cross-jurisdictional collaborations; understanding of engineering principles and oversight of engineering consultants; and innovative tools for funding conservation at different scales.
- His strategic support is responsive to local needs while also integrating with statewide initiatives and efforts in which he frequently plays a unique role.
- He has in-depth knowledge of and familiarity working within San Mateo RCD's service district, service model, and business model, our programs and projects, and a deep knowledge of the needs of this RCD and its staff.
- He brings in-depth knowledge of and extensive experience with RCDs generally, including strategic and innovative opportunities for funding RCDs and the unique role of RCDs in local, regional, and statewide conservation.
- He has strong, established, and unique working relationships with a large suite of RCD partners.
- He has capacity to provide these services “on demand,” with rapid turn-around and little-to-no orientation to the specific project or issue.