



**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Agenda Item # 4**

**AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY**

**Meeting Date:** June 9, 2020

**Subject:** Authorization for execution of Amendment 2 to the original agreement with Grassroots Ecology for Redwood Grove Stewardship services

**Prepared by:** Manuel A. Hernandez, Maintenance Services Director

**Approved by:** Chris Jordan, City Manager

**Attachment(s):**

1. Grassroots Ecology Letter and Scope of Work Summary

**Initiated by:**

Staff

**Previous Council Consideration:**

June 26, 2018

October 22, 2019

**Fiscal Impact:**

The agreement will cost \$233,130 (\$77,710 per year) and is budgeted in the FY 2020/21 Maintenance Services Department operating budget.

- Breakdown of funds to be used:
  - o General Fund
- Amount already included in approved 20/21 budget: Yes
- Amount above budget requested: 0

**Environmental Review:**

Not applicable

**Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:**

- None

**Summary:**

- Having a steward to manage/restore Redwood Grove will preserve the natural open space entrusted to the City.
- The amendment extends the agreement with Grassroots ecology an additional three years.

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**Reviewed By:**

City Manager

*CJ*

City Attorney

*JH*

Finance Director

*SE*

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**Subject:** Agreement Amendment – Redwood Grove Nature Preserve Stewardship Services

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**Staff Recommendation:**

Authorize the City Manager to execute an amendment to the agreement with Grassroots Ecology in the total amount of \$233,130 for a three-year term (\$77,710 per year) to manage and restore Redwood Grove Nature Preserve.



**Subject:** Agreement Amendment – Redwood Grove Nature Preserve Stewardship Services

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### **Purpose**

Authorize the City Manager to execute an amendment to an agreement on behalf of the city with Grassroots Ecology in the total amount of \$233,130 for continued stewardship in managing and performing restoration of the open space known as Redwood Grove.

### **Background**

The City of Los Altos owns Redwood Grove Nature Preserve; 5.7-acre nature preserve located off University Avenue. The City has contracted with Grassroots Ecology to assist in preserving and maintaining this valuable community asset. The term of the current contract dated October 3, 2018 is valid through the end of the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

The stewardship that Grassroots Ecology provides as part of their scope of work for this agreement includes important aspects of care for Redwood Grove. Here are a few very important items that Grassroots staff and volunteers take care of in Redwood Grove.

In the late spring and early summer, Grassroots Ecology removes invasive weeds through scything or hand-pulling. Left unattended to, these weeds would not only become unsightly, but would increase the fire hazard in the area. Removing these weeds without chemicals is very time consuming and could not be handled by staff at this time.

Grassroots has recently transplanted native plants to the area and they require attention for at least the first two years for the root system to gain a foothold. There is not an automatic irrigation system in the area to provide the water and care needed. Grassroots has provided attention and plan to continue to provide that attention. Additional native plantings, that Grassroots Ecology would install, are also planned in the future through matching grants that are secured by them.

The health of the redwood trees in the nature preserve is also something that Grassroots staff and volunteers assist the City with. The redwood trees undergo intense stress during the hot dry summer, as they were planted over 100 years ago out of their natural range (the coastal fog belt). As a result, this natural asset relies on continued irrigation utilizing specialized watering machinery that is set up by Grassroots Ecology staff. Without regular watering in the summer, the redwoods could suffer significant strain in health, which could contribute to their unhealthy appearance and create limb hazards.

### **Discussion/Analysis**

This amendment (Amendment 2) is to authorize a contract extension with Grassroots Ecology for the third, fourth, and fifth year of their contracted stewardship services in Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. The amount for Grassroots Ecology's work in fiscal year 20/21 is already budgeted in the Maintenance Services Department operating budget. The total amount that will need to be budgeted over the three-year extension is \$233,130.



**Subject:** Agreement Amendment – Redwood Grove Nature Preserve Stewardship Services

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### Options

- 1) Authorize the City Manager to execute an amendment to the agreement with Grassroots Ecology to extend the agreement dated October 3, 2018 for an additional three-year term.

**Advantages:** Grassroots Ecology will continue to provide stewardship services to the City of Los Altos for Redwood Grove Nature Preserve through fiscal year ending 2023

**Disadvantages:** None

- 2) Do not authorize City Manager to execute the amendment to the current contract with Grassroots Ecology.

**Advantages:** None

**Disadvantages:** Redwood Grove will no longer have stewardship services to manage and restore the nature preserve. Staff will either have to forego stewardship services or go out to RFP for future services.

### Recommendation

The staff recommends Option 1.



April 17, 2020

Manny Hernandez  
City of Los Altos  
1 North San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

Subject: Redwood Grove Stewardship Contract Extension

Dear Mr. Hernandez,

Grassroots Ecology is requesting a 3-year extension on our current partnership contract for restoration and community engagement at Redwood Grove. Please find attached our proposed annual work scope and budget for Redwood Grove Stewardship.

In FY 2019-20, Grassroots Ecology organized 289 volunteers to care for Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. Local adults and youth volunteered during community workdays over the summer and on Saturday mornings to learn about and care for Redwood Grove. Additionally, volunteers joined us from Los Altos Rotary Club, INSEAD alumni, De Anza College, MVLA Service League of Boys, Climate Corps fellows, friends and family celebrating a six year old's birthday, and St. Simon School fourth graders.

This year, with support from Valley Water, the local Homeowners Association, creekside neighbors, and Los Altos city staff, volunteers established a new riparian habitat restoration project alongside "Manresa Trail" extending the urban wildlife corridor. This trail is parallel to Adobe Creek and connects the south entrance of Redwood Grove to Manresa Way. The \$150,752 grant from Valley Water supports erosion control and plant diversity restoration in this area through 2023. This year alone, volunteers planted over 950 native plants and reduced invasive weeds within Redwood Grove and along the new Manresa Trail project.

An annual work scope and budget for continuing stewardship at Redwood Grove is attached. We look forward to continuing this partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Von Feldt", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Alex Von Feldt  
Executive Director

## Redwood Grove Annual Scope of Work 2020-2023

Grassroots Ecology has partnered with the City of Los Altos to serve as the Steward of Redwood Grove since 2009. In 2018 the partnership was renewed through a RFP process in which Grassroots Ecology was awarded a new contract for two years with the possibility of extending to five years. As the second year concludes, Grassroots Ecology proposes the contract be extended to five years with the following annual scope of work.

### Task 1: Project Coordination and Administration

- Quarterly progress report shared with City staff
- Track and report volunteer hours and restoration activities on quarterly basis
- Coordinate with City on regular maintenance activities, and special projects such as bankstabilization
- Monitor restoration areas using fixed photomonitoring points on quarterly basis
- Pursue outside grant funding opportunities
- Make presentations to City Council and Commissions as needed

### Task 2: Habitat Restoration through Volunteer Events

- Conduct approximately 24 volunteer workdays per year, plus the Grove Guardians program for youth to volunteer over the summer to accomplish restoration goals (see Task 4 below)
- Maintain and restore native plants throughout Redwood Grove. Approximately 800 native plants will be installed throughout Redwood Grove and Manresa Trail. Revegetation strategies include container stock grown at our native plant nursery, live cuttings, and direct seeding.
- Remove invasive plant species using mechanical methods, such as hand pulling. Priority species for removal include: Algerian ivy, periwinkle, privet, Himalayan berry, French broom, poison hemlock, tree of heaven, and Italian thistle

### Task 3: Maintenance

- Perform regular maintenance, including irrigation, weeding in areas difficult for volunteers, and seasonal pruning in restoration areas (*Estimated at 10 staff hours per week for 24 weeks. Includes keeping tools and supplies maintained, keeping the storage area organized, minor repairs to the rain barrel system, etc.*)
- Irrigation of restoration zones will be done approximately once every two weeks, depending on weather conditions. The restoration zone under the main grove of redwoods will be watered weekly for a duration of approximately 3 hours through the dry season (20 weeks), plus the watering duration described in the next item. (*Estimated at 4 hours/week for 20 weeks, plus 10 additional 4-hour watering sessions.*)
- Manually operate redwood tree sprinklers through the dry season. 20 weeks of watering at 6 stations for 3 hours/week per station, with stations running two at a time. (*Estimated at 10 staff hours per week for 20 weeks*)

### Task 4: Community Education & Outreach

- Conduct the Grove Guardians summer program for middle and high school students to gain in-depth experience in habitat restoration and maintenance activities (*9 sessions over summer*)
- Work with community partners such as GreenTown Los Altos and Friends of Adobe Creek to conduct educational activities in the community
- Maintain plant identification signs, and update kiosk seasonally with information about restoration activities and happenings around Redwood Grove
- Include updates about Redwood Grove in e-newsletter to Grassroots Ecology email list, maintain Redwood Grove information page on Grassroots Ecology's website, and include Redwood Grove updates on Grassroots Ecology Instagram and Facebook page

