



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

R-16-06
January 19, 2016

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Ten-year Status Report and Recommended Continuation of a Slender False Brome Integrated Pest Management Program

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the full Board of Directors a continuation of the Slender False Brome Program on District preserves and nearby private parcels for an approximate program cost of \$1,250,000 over the next ten years.

SUMMARY

On December 14, 2005 (R-05-122), the District's Board of Directors approved a ten-year plan to control Slender False Brome (SFB) from the Thornewood Open Space Preserve and the surrounding Woodside neighborhoods. Four major tasks were approved under this work plan: 1) reclassification of SFB as a noxious weed by the state of California; 2) treatment and monitoring of SFB on District land; 3) treatment and monitoring of SFB on adjacent lands; and 4) pursuit of grants for SFB control. Task 1 was completed in 2006. This progress report will focus on tasks 2 through 4 and recommends an approach for the next ten years. Treatment of SFB has largely been successful; however, the infestation area is larger than originally estimated. Staff recommends the future program focus on treating SFB on District preserves and on properties most likely to infest District preserves, while at the same time encouraging partners to control SFB on other properties.

DISCUSSION

Population size and range of SFB

Increased efforts at detection have revealed that SFB is more widespread throughout San Mateo County and the Santa Cruz Mountains than originally believed. In 2009 the total net area of land infested with SFB was believed to be 100 acres (40 acres of District land and 60 acres of adjacent private lands). The estimated population of SFB is now known to be at least 250 acres (75 acres of District land and 175 acres of adjacent private lands and other land management public agencies). However, the full extent of population size and range on lands not owned or managed by the District is unknown.

Treatment and monitoring of SFB on District land

As of December 2014, the SFB program has been incorporated into the District-wide Integrated Pest Management Program. Additional Best Management Practices have been implemented to ensure that SFB is not spread by staff, partners, volunteers, or contractors working within infested areas.

Since 2004, District staff and contractors have controlled SFB at Thornewood Open Space Preserve (OSP). In subsequent years, additional outbreaks of SFB were found at El Corte de Madera Creek OSP (ECdM), La Honda Creek OSP, and Saratoga Gap OSP (Figure 1). At Thornewood OSP in 2012, several new infestations were detected. In 2012, the District acquired the former Gallaway Property as an addition to ECdM (see R-12-50) which contained SFB.

Treatment at Saratoga Gap is nearly complete; in August of 2015, four flowering plants were found and removed prior to seed set. ECdM has two populations with ongoing treatment. Treatment in the northern section of La Honda Creek OSP is also ongoing. New outbreaks have been found along the length of La Honda and San Gregorio Creeks on private properties; the extent is unknown at this time and limited treatment has begun.

District management efforts thus far have involved the removal of SFB from woodland areas but have not addressed treatment options for the removal of SFB from sensitive riparian habitats. Despite successful control of SFB within core areas of OSPs, a very dense infestation still exists along Dennis Martin Creek in Thornewood OSP. Consultation with regulatory agencies for addressing potential impacts to California red-legged frog resulting from the treatment actions is under way and should be completed by Spring of 2016, with treatment in riparian habitats expected to begin in Summer of 2016.

Treatment and monitoring of SFB on adjacent private lands

Since 2009, 103 property owners have had their land surveyed for SFB; approximately 200 infested acres have been treated between one and six times, and a total of \$173,114 has been issued in reimbursements to those property owners.

Grants for SFB control

From 2008 through 2011, the District received \$57,518 in grant funds or labor for the SFB control program. Grant funds were directed toward controlling SFB on private property and have been awarded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Noxious Weed Program. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) has provided labor to treat SFB on private property and District preserves.

In 2011, funding for the CDFA Noxious Weed Program was eliminated from the California State budget. Funds for SFB treatment provided through ARRA were one-time awards and not ongoing funding opportunities. In 2010-11, two grant applications were submitted to the NFWF but unfortunately were not selected for funding. The San Mateo County Resource Conservation District (RCD) has received funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address SFB infestations in the La Honda area, which is currently the only source of governmental funding for SFB control besides the District's funding.

Recommendation for Continuation of the Program

Staff recommends that the future program on District lands focus on treatment and prevention of further spread of SFB. Treatment of SFB on District preserves will continue until regrowth no longer occurs. Treatment at creekside areas in Thornewood and La Honda Creek OSPs is already permitted and will be implemented this fiscal year. Treatment at creekside areas District-wide will be implemented once the Fish and Wildlife recovery permit has been received (anticipated in Spring of 2016) and as staff capacity allows.

Staff recommends that the future program focus on treating infested properties immediately adjacent to District lands and parcels which otherwise have the potential to infest District preserves. Use of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District IPM Program's modeling for invasion pathways will determine priority properties.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The continuation of the SFB control program is covered under CEQA by the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District IPM Program approved on December 2014.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. Notices were also sent to persons requesting notice of resource management activities and to property owners and residents near Thornewood, El Corte de Madera, and La Honda Creek Open Space Preserves.

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost of Program since Inception

When the District Board of Directors approved the ten-year plan for SFB in 2005, it was estimated that \$1.2 million dollars would be spent. As of December 1, 2015, the entire program is estimated to have cost the District \$809,500. The District has been in contract with the San Mateo RCD since March of 2014 (see R-14-48) for a total of \$311,866. There is \$191,500 remaining on this contract to continue work on private lands through March 31, 2017. District funds cover the SFB treatment on District lands (Contractors and Staff time) and on private lands. Since 2012, the District has funded 100% of the reimbursement for treatment on private lands, for a total of \$173,114.

Continuation of Program Costs

Yearly costs to control SFB on District land and prevent the spread will amount to \$25,000 per year. Control on private properties, administered by the RCD, along with the pursuit of additional funding through grants, will amount to an additional \$100,000 per year. The expenditures for this program will be approved annually by the full Board during the budget approval process. The total cost of this program for 10 years is anticipated to be \$1,250,000.

NEXT STEPS

1. Yearly treatment and its potential environmental impacts will be evaluated as part of the District-wide Integrated Pest Management Program.
2. Staff to investigate and implement additional Integrated Pest Management techniques and mapping efforts.
3. Staff will investigate a Memorandum of Understanding with the San Mateo County RCD for a long-term commitment to oversee work with private property owners on parcels which could potentially infest District lands.
4. Staff will continue to encourage and develop partnerships with other agencies to address SFB infestations, including technical advice and education, which do not pose a threat to District lands.

5. Provide assistance to the San Mateo RCD to pursue grant funding for SFB management.

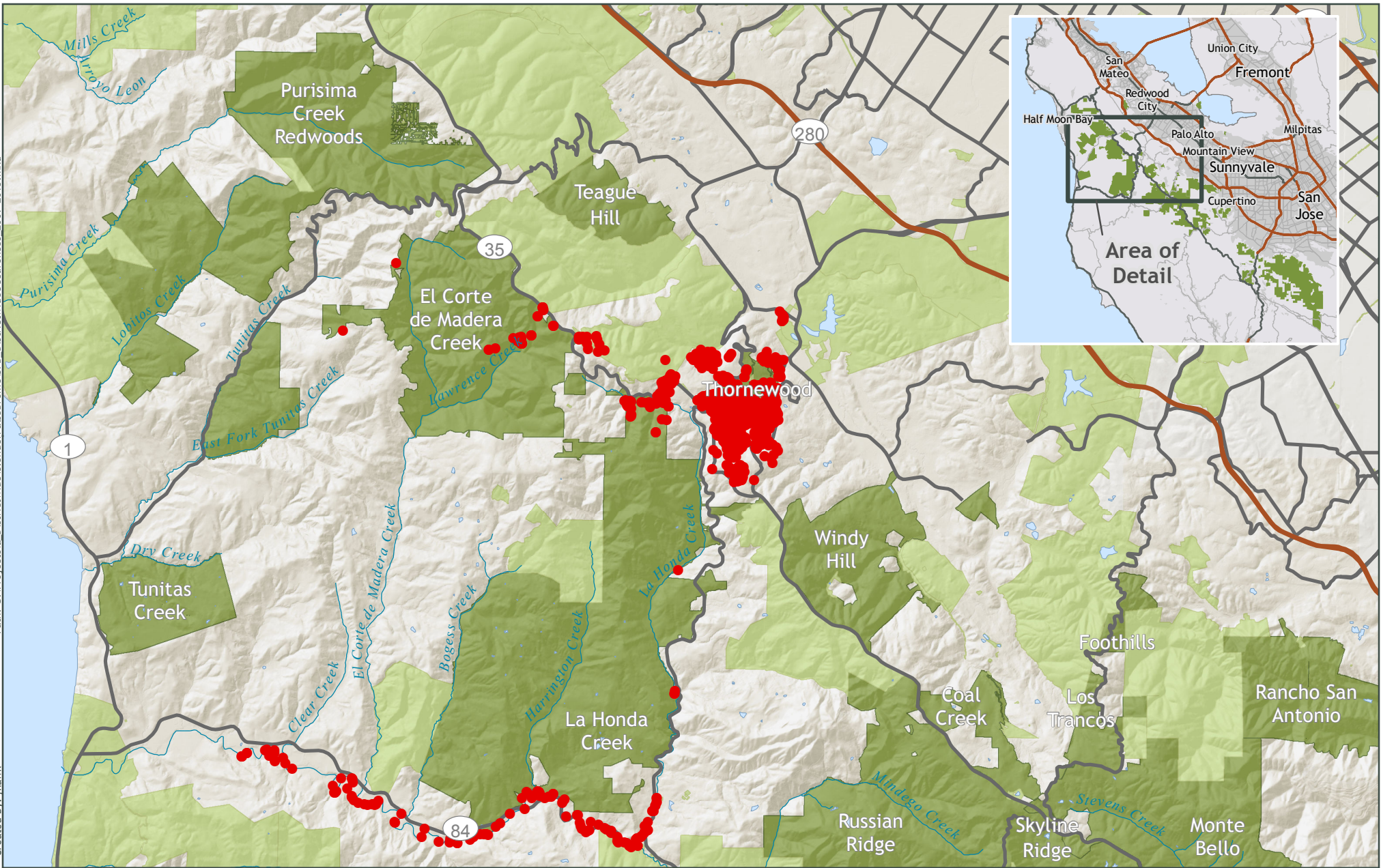
Attachments:

1. Slender False Brome Project Area

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Slender false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*)*

*Excludes Saratoga Gap Open Space Preserve

- MROSD Preserves
- Other Protected Lands
- Private Property
- Slender false brome observation (2009 - 2013)

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(MROSD)



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January, 2016