



MEMORANDUM REPORT

Meeting Date: March 19, 2019

TO: Board of Commissioners of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District

FROM: J. Logan, General Manager

SUBJECT: Goat Services for Fire Fuel Reduction

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive Report on Goat Services for Fire Fuel Reduction

BACKGROUND

Historically, the grazing of fields by goats was used as a method of vegetation mitigation and fire fuel management. Commencing in 2006, Ecosystem Concepts Inc. (ECI) goat services were contracted by the Los Altos Hills County Fire District (District) to mitigate vegetation for fire fuel reduction in difficult to reach terrain such as the Byrne Preserve. This effort resulted in significant decrease of vegetative mass thus creating desirable fire breaks.

ECI is a vegetation management consultant, providing services for twenty-four years to public agencies including fire agencies, municipalities and government entities to implement fire fuel reduction programs. ECI utilizes environmentally friendly techniques that are natural and enhances wildlife habitat, uses no toxic chemical sprays, requires minimal manpower with no chain saws or mechanized equipment to reduce fire fuel vegetation. Thus, the service renders no environmental hazards or loud noises that disturb residents or the environment.

DISCUSSION

ECI is currently engaged with the District to develop a service plan, timetable and terms of an agreement for goat services in late spring of 2019. Due to the large amounts of rainfall experienced during the winter and spring months, greater vegetation is anticipated and planning for the areas of removal is underway. District staff will be reaching out to agencies within the Fire District such as Cal Water Services, Purissima Hills Water District and Town of Los Altos Hills to determine those public areas that will benefit from and are suitable for fire fuel reduction through vegetation mitigation by the goats.

Because of the modern application yet historic nature of goat services for fire fuel reduction through vegetation mitigation, there is a human interest in this natural fire prevention service. To encourage community interest, articles will be produced for publication in the local media and on the District website with the hope the community will welcome the goats and the accompanying herding dogs and goat herders during the time they provide goats in the fields.

It is hoped the event will be a time for families to enjoy the spring and seeing nature at its lively best.

Attachment: None