San Jose Citywide Restoring California Native Oaks Policy Recommendation

Proposed by Citywide Commissioner Vedant Janapaty

Background: According to the California Fish and Wildlife Department, the Invasive Species Program has already identified invasive species that have firmly established their populations in California's wildlands and waterways. Some of these invasive plants are hanging sedge, meadow knapweed, and one of the most common, Algerian ivy. Santa Clara County has identified a four step process for mitigating the spread of invasive species: prevention, detection, active control, and restoration. Prevention entails frequent park inspections to tabulate the spread of invasive species. Detection involves educating volunteers or park staff to identify an invasive species. Active control is the organization of invasive species removal projects. Finally, restoration is the reintroduction of native species to these regions. Among the viable native species is the oak. Oak woodlands help to protect the soil from erosion. More than twenty five oak species are native to California. However, California's oak woodlands have been dramatically reduced over the past couple years. Hence, there has been a push to return California ecosystems to a rich supply of oaks.

Summary: The following plan requests approval on a plan to bring the ReOak initiative to San Jose. Currently, San Jose parks, such as the Guadalupe Reservoir County Park, Almaden Quicksilver County Park, Guadalupe Oak Grove Park, are locations that are the most prone to a large fire outbreak. California native oaks, unlike the invasive eucalyptus tree, do not drain the water table and are drought tolerant. As a result, they are not fuel for a wildfire, one of the city's primary environmental concerns.

The following plan involves four steps for planting native oaks.

1. **Select a Site:** If the park is a flat area with a high water table, valley oaks should be used. Otherwise, if the region is a hillside with dry soil, blue or black oaks will be the best option. If livestock inhabit the area, park authorities will need to ensure that acorns, seeds, and trees are protected from trampling during the initial phases.
2. **Planting:** Circles with a radius of 3 to 5 feet should be created for each oak. Acorns should be buried at a depth of one foot and planted horizontally. Planting should happen during December.
3. **Plant Protection:** Garden stakes should be used to protect the seeds from predators. These can be purchased in garden stores.
4. **Watering and Care:** Growth will usually be observed by the end of May. Weed removal projects will need to be frequently conducted to ensure stable growth.

Goal: The goal of this proposal is to mitigate damage to the wilderness by reintroducing twenty five drought-tolerant and fire resistant oaks in various parks in the City.

Potential Funds: Funds will be needed for the following:

1. Safety Fences: $42 Cost Description
2. Oak Seeds: $50 Cost Description
3. Shovels: $15 Cost Description

In total, this project will have a budget of around $110. This is a rough estimate based on the cost description but could change if additional project sites open up.

Bibliography:

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