



# GREAT REDWOOD TRAIL AGENCY

**MEETING DATE:** September 18, 2025

**AGENDA ITEM:** 8. Professional Services Agreement with Patty Clary for Phase 1 of "Workplan for Toxic Pollutant Assessment and Clean-Up Options on the Great Redwood Trail Corridor"

**FROM:** Elaine Hogan

Professional Services Agreement with Patty Clary for Phase 1 of Workplan for  
**RE:** Toxic Pollutant Assessment and Clean-Up Options on the Great Redwood Trail Corridor

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

GRTA has inherited a corridor used for industrial and railroad purposes for over 100 years. As we work toward clean-up and environmental restoration through trail development that results in public access, we are in need of a practical framework to identify toxic pollutants and assess contamination levels consistently across all trail segments in order to inform decision-making and identify clean-up opportunities. This item would authorize a professional services agreement with environmental expert Patty Clary to assist GRTA in scoping environmental restoration work, which Staff expects to be completed by January 2026.

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## **BACKGROUND:**

GRTA has inherited a corridor used for industrial and railroad purposes for over 100 years. As we work toward clean-up and environmental restoration through trail development that results in public access, we are in need of a practical framework to identify toxic pollutants and assess contamination levels consistently across all trail segments in order to inform decision-making and identify clean-up opportunities.

Staff seek to enter into a professional services agreement with Patty Clary to conduct Phase 1 of the attached "Workplan for Toxic Pollutant Assessment and Clean-Up Options on the Great Redwood Trail Corridor"

The proposed project will be carried out in two phases:

- Phase I will focus on identifying experts, community members, and agencies who should be involved in Phase II and working with GRTA staff to develop a process and timeline for next steps.
- Phase II will deliver a comprehensive framework, tools, and resources for assessing and prioritizing toxic clean-up across the trail corridor.

Phase I deliverables noted below are expected to be presented to the board in January 2026:

- Description of potential experts, agencies, and contractors.
- Draft project timeline for subsequent phases.

- Summary of initial community and stakeholder engagement.

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## **CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY - PATTY CLARY:**

Patty Clary brings more than three decades of specialized experience addressing toxic pollution, environmental health risks, and regulatory compliance in California. She is the founder and long-time Executive Director of Californians for Alternatives to Toxics (CATs), a nonprofit organization dedicated to identifying, reducing, and eliminating toxic pollutants in communities and natural environments. In that role, she coordinated numerous successful efforts to investigate, document, and remediate contamination, often collaborating with scientists, regulators, and attorneys to ensure evidence-based solutions.

Patty's work has required deep engagement with expert witnesses, toxicologists, and regulatory agencies. She has managed complex projects involving site-specific investigations, exposure assessment, and the development of clean-up strategies, giving her a strong foundation for leading the Great Redwood Trail Agency's (GRTA) Toxic Pollutant Assessment and Clean-Up Recommendations project.

Her expertise extends internationally: she served for five years on a United Nations-sponsored committee studying alternatives to the ozone-depleting biocide methyl bromide, traveling globally with scientists and policymakers to evaluate and recommend safer substitutes.

Locally, she also has direct, relevant experience with the Great Redwood Trail corridor. She led litigation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) against the former North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA)—GRTA's predecessor agency—ultimately prevailing in the California Supreme Court. That work helped set the stage for the State Legislature's decision to create the GRTA and transform the corridor into a public trail. Her familiarity with the corridor's industrial history, regulatory challenges, and legacy contamination issues uniquely positions her to guide this project on behalf of the Agency today.

In sum, Patty Clary offers the GRTA a rare combination of:

- Technical and regulatory expertise in toxic pollutant assessment and clean-up.
- Leadership experience managing complex, multi-stakeholder environmental projects.
- Direct corridor-specific knowledge of the Great Redwood Trail's legacy industrial footprint and environmental risks.
- Proven ability to identify qualified scientists, engage community stakeholders, and coordinate effective remediation strategies.

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## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Up to \$25,000 for Phase I to come from GRTA's adopted annual budget, line item "Contract Service Fees"

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Board find the selection of Patty Clary exempt from competitive procurement processes outlined in NCRA policy handbook section 1206 due to exemption criteria for specialized services described in Handbook section 1203(6) and delegate authority to the Executive Director to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Patty Clary in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for completion of Phase 1 activities described in the attached "Workplan for Toxic Pollutant Assessment and Clean-Up Options on the Great Redwood Trail Corridor", in a form approved by counsel. Staff further recommends the Board deleted to the Executive Director the authority to make minor amendments to the contract that do not significantly change the scope thereof, as may be needed.

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. WORKPLAN FOR GRTA TOXIC POLLUTANT ASSESSMENT AND CLEAN-UP OPTIONS

# **Workplan for Toxic Pollutant Assessment and Clean-Up Options on the Great Redwood Trail Corridor**

**Lead Consultant:** Patty Clary

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## **1. Project Purpose**

The Great Redwood Trail Agency (GRTA) seeks to develop a consistent, actionable framework to identify, assess, and remediate toxic pollutants resulting from more than a century of railroad operations along the GRTA-controlled right-of-way of the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad.

The project will be carried out in two phases:

- **Phase I** will focus on identifying experts, community members, and agencies who should be involved in Phase II and working with GRTA staff to develop a process and timeline for next steps.
  - **Phase II** will deliver a comprehensive framework, tools, and resources for assessing and prioritizing toxic clean-up across the trail corridor.
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**2. Phase I Scope of Work** (due January 9, 2026, with anticipated Board review at the January 23, 2026 GRTA Board Meeting)

Patty Clary, acting as prime consultant and project coordinator, will:

### **1. Identify Expertise and Partnerships**

- Deliver a description of scientists and other experts who may be involved in developing Phase II deliverables advising GRTA on regulatory issues, toxicity exposure levels, risk, and potential actions.
- Identify local contractors, consultants, and agencies with relevant expertise.

### **2. Develop Next Steps in Preparation for Phase II**

- With the Executive Director, prepare a project timeline and budget estimate for future work to be performed in Phase II.
- Establish a process for determining which experts will provide various components of the required information and create a budget for relevant subcontracts, as applicable.

### **3. Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

- Reach out to interested members of the public—environmental advocacy groups, local rail historians, educators, and others—to invite input and gather information.

#### **Deliverables by January 9, 2026:**

- Description of potential experts, agencies, and contractors.
- Draft project timeline for subsequent phases.
- Summary of initial community and stakeholder engagement.

**Compensation for Phase I: \$22,000**

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### **3. Phase II Scope of Work** (Future phase, anticipated completion in 2026)

Building on Phase I, Phase II will provide GRTA with a structured work plan to guide toxic site assessment and clean-up across the full trail corridor.

#### **1. Framework Development**

- Draft an investigation and assessment flowchart to standardize decision-making.
- Define criteria for prioritizing sites, focusing on historical uses (e.g., railyards, sidings, adjacent industry).
- Integrate environmental overlays (e.g., water bodies, sensitive habitats) with proposed future use (e.g., campgrounds and other trail amenities) to assist with decision-making.

#### **2. Substance Identification and Testing**

- Identify the types of substances and materials likely to be present.
- Recommend appropriate testing methods.

#### **3. Clean-Up and Remediation Options**

- Summarize available clean-up, removal, confinement, and monitoring strategies.

- Identify when referral to outside agencies (e.g., US EPA, CalEPA, CalRecycle, State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Toxic Substance Control) may be required or recommended.

#### 4. Funding and Resource Identification

- Compile potential funding sources and approaches used by other public agencies for any recommended actions such as clean-up, removal, confinement, and/or monitoring.
- Provide a list of local contractors, consultants, and agencies available for testing, clean-up and monitoring.

#### Deliverables for Phase II:

- A standardized **flowchart protocol** for site investigation and prioritization.
  - List of likely **substances/materials** and recommended **testing methods**.
  - Catalog of **clean-up and remediation options**.
  - Overview of **funding sources and strategies**.
  - List of **contractors, consultants, and agencies** to support clean-up.
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#### 4. Outcomes

Together, Phase I and Phase II will provide GRTA with:

- A practical framework to assess contamination consistently across all trail segments.
- Identification of priority sites and recommended options for testing and clean-up.
- A network of experts, agencies, contractors, and community partners to engage with during trail segment development.
- A long-term plan to secure resources and implement clean-up as trail development proceeds.