

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
December 2, 2004

**SANBORN COUNTY PARK  
TRAIL MASTER PLAN**

File No. 04-058  
Project Manager: Amy Hutzal

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$75,000 to Santa Clara County for the development of a Trail Master Plan for Sanborn County Park, to include the planning of a six-mile segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail in western Santa Clara County.

**LOCATION:** City of Saratoga in western Santa Clara County

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: Project Location and Site Map

Exhibit 2: Letters of Support

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 311060-64 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) to Santa Clara County to complete the trail master plan and environmental documentation for the plan for Sanborn County Park in western Santa Clara County, subject to the condition that no Conservancy funds shall be disbursed until the Executive Officer of the Conservancy has approved in writing: a final work plan, including a budget and schedule; and any contractors proposed to be used.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the authority of the Conservancy under Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31164 regarding projects of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program; and

2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.”
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**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy authorize a grant of up to \$75,000 to the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department (“the County”) to fund planning for development of an approximate 6-mile segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail in Sanborn County Park in western Santa Clara County. The County will develop a Trail Master Plan and the environmental documentation for the plan.

The Trail Master Plan will identify the route and design parameters for a new 6-mile segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail through Sanborn County Park. This new trail segment will connect to lengthy existing segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail at Castle Rock State Park to the north and to Lexington Reservoir County Park, St. Joseph Hill Open Space Preserve, Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, and Almaden Quicksilver County Park to the south. The plan will identify improvements to existing trails as well as designate park trail uses. Currently the park does not allow for multiple uses on its trails. This plan will allow for the development of a multi-use Ridge Trail segment and adoption of that use in the Master Plan. Trail widths will vary from between five and ten feet, with two-foot shoulders, to be sensitive to environmental conditions and terrain and to promote trail safety by limiting the speed of bicyclists in some areas.

**Site Description:** The project is located in the Santa Cruz Mountain Range in western Santa Clara County. The project will focus on trail planning for a major gap of the Ridge Trail between Highways 35 and 17 (Exhibit 1) within Sanborn County Park. The County will develop plans for the Bay Area Ridge Trail as a multi-use trail connecting Sunnyvale Mountain to Lexington Reservoir through Lyndon Canyon. This project will be an integral part of the Sanborn Park Trail Master Plan necessary for implementing multi-use access to this park where multi-use is currently not allowed. Sanborn County Park is a lushly wooded park of over 3,688 acres nestled in the Santa Cruz Mountains between Saratoga and Skyline Boulevard. This mountain park of Redwoods, Douglas Fir, and Tan Bark Oak, offers hiking, camping, and picnicking opportunities year round and serves a diverse regional community.

**Project History:** The Conservancy is a major partner in helping to implement the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Since 2001, the Conservancy has approved approximately \$4 million dollars in grants for planning and project implementation, helping complete more than 50 miles of new trail. This project would continue to build connections between existing trail segments and help complete the more than 500-mile trail along the ridgeline of the San Francisco Bay.

**PROJECT FINANCING:**

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Coastal Conservancy                                   | \$75,000         |
| Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation | <u>75,000</u>    |
| <b>Total Project Cost</b>                             | <b>\$150,000</b> |

The requested Conservancy funds are expected to come from the FY 03/04 California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40) appropriation for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. As discussed below, implementation of the Bay Area Ridge Trail is one of the goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

This proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program enabling legislation codified at Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31160 to 31164). That chapter directs the Conservancy to address the resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area in a "coordinated, comprehensive, and effective way."

Pursuant to Section 31162, the Conservancy may award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay area that help to achieve various goals, including the goal of increasing public access "to and around the bay, coast, ridgetops, and urban open space, consistent with the rights of private property owners, and without having a significant adverse impact on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife, including wetlands and other wildlife habitats through completion and operation of regional bay, coast, and ridge trail systems, and local trails connecting to population centers and public facilities, which are part of a regional trail system and regionally adopted master plans and general plans, and through the provision and preservation of related facilities, such as interpretive centers, picnic areas, staging areas, and campgrounds." The proposed project plans for completion of the Ridge Trail in Sanborn County Park in Santa Clara County.

Section 31163(a) directs the Conservancy to cooperate with nonprofit land trusts and other organizations in identifying and adopting long-term resource and outdoor recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay area. Completion of the Ridge Trail is one of the goals identified in the Bay Area Open Space Council's "Regional Needs Briefing Book."

The proposed project satisfies the criteria for determining project priorities under Section 31163(c) in the following respects: 1) the Ridge Trail is a multi-jurisdictional resource; 2) the Ridge Trail serves a regional constituency; 3) the Sanborn Park trail master planning project can be implemented in a timely way; 4) project provides an opportunity for benefits that could be lost if the County is unable to develop a trail master plan for Sanborn Park; and 5) the project includes significant matching contributions from the County.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

This project will complete planning work to open approximately six miles of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The project helps to implement Goal #11, Objective B of the Conservancy's strategic plan which seeks to develop an additional 60 miles of the Ridge Trail.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S  
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** This project is supported by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, a nonprofit organization dedicated to completing the Ridge Trail. The Responsible Organized Mountain Pedalers, representing a diverse coalition of mountain biking enthusiasts, has expressed a strong support for this planning project. State Senator McPherson and Assemblymember Simitian, as well as the City of Saratoga, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Santa Clara County, California's Department of State Parks, and all local cities and county jurisdictions are supportive of developing this trail plan for the future enjoyment of this park.
4. **Location:** The proposed project is located in Santa Clara County, within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
5. **Need:** Conservancy funding is needed to make these projects happen. The County has not had the funding to complete the Trail Master Plan and related documents needed to develop this trail segment. Construction of the trail segments will most likely be funded with a mix of Santa Clara County Park Charter funds, per-capita State Park Bond funds, and grants from outside sources.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The Ridge Trail is truly a regional attraction. The 500-mile trail network offers spectacular views of the Bay Area and links many parklands and open space preserves. In addition, the Ridge Trail will be tied to the San Francisco Bay Trail and the California Coastal Trail systems, creating an extensive trail network. Completion of the Ridge Trail is one of the goals identified in the Bay Area Open Space Council's "Regional Needs Briefing Book".

**Additional Criteria**

7. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
8. **Readiness:** The grantee would like to start the planning work in the Spring of 2005. If approved, it is anticipated that work will begin at that time.
9. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** "See the "Project History" section above.
10. **Return to Conservancy:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
11. **Cooperation:** The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program of the State Coastal Conservancy has been working cooperatively with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council to

administer a competitive grant program to identify projects that help implement the Ridge Trail. The best proposals from that grant program are recommended for funding by the Conservancy.

**COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

This project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15262 because it involves only feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions and will not have a legally binding effect on later activities. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.