

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
December 13, 2007

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA COMMUNITY-BASED, EDUCATIONAL, ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND TRAIL PROJECTS GRANT ROUND

File No. 07-092
Project Manager: Jeff Melby

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to grant 20 nonprofit organizations and public agencies a total of up to \$1,774,681 for community-based, educational, environmental restoration and trail projects.

LOCATION: Various locations within the nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma; Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Locations](#)

Exhibit 2: [Request for Grant Proposals](#)

Exhibit 3: [Letters of Support](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31000 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes up to one million seven hundred seventy-four thousand six hundred eighty-one dollars (\$1,774,681) to be disbursed among 20 nonprofit organizations and public agencies for community-based, educational, environmental restoration and trail projects as follows:

- ♦ Acterra: Seventy-two thousand dollars (\$72,000) for restoration of the Arastradero Creek Riparian Corridor, Santa Clara County.
- ♦ Berryessa Trails & Conservation: Eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) for habitat restoration and trail building in the Lake Berryessa area, Napa County.
- ♦ California Department of Parks and Recreation: fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for habitat restoration at Half Moon Bay State Beach and Pigeon Point Light Station, San Mateo County.

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- ♦ California State Parks Foundation: Sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) for wetland restoration and trail building at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, San Francisco County.
- ♦ East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD): Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to restore oak savannah habitat on EBMUD watershed lands, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.
- ♦ Friends of Sausal Creek: Thirty-two thousand dollars (\$32,000) for habitat restoration and trail building at Dimond Park along Sausal Creek, Alameda County.
- ♦ Golden Gate Audubon Society: Ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) for wetland and stream restoration at Arrowhead Marsh at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline and at Horseshoe Creek, Alameda County.
- ♦ Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy: One hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) for riparian restoration at Redwood Creek, Marin County, and trail building at the Presidio of San Francisco, San Francisco County.
- ♦ Literacy for Environmental Justice: Ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) for wetland restoration at Heron's Head Park, San Francisco County.
- ♦ Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space: Thirty-six thousand one hundred dollars (\$36,100) for habitat restoration at Bothin Marsh, Marin County.
- ♦ Marin Conservation Corps: One hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) for habitat restoration at Lower Redwood Creek, Marin County.
- ♦ Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District: One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for habitat restoration and trail work at the Napa River Ecological Reserve, Napa County.
- ♦ San Mateo County Department of Parks: Thirty-eight thousand one hundred twenty-two dollars (\$38,122) for trail work at San Bruno Mountain, San Mateo County.
- ♦ Save San Francisco Bay Association: One hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000) for habitat restoration at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline, Alameda County; the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, Alameda County; San Francisquito Creek, Santa Clara County; Bair Island, San Mateo County; and Santa Venetia Marsh, Marin County.
- ♦ Solano Resource Conservation District: One hundred forty-eight thousand six hundred eighty dollars (\$148,680) for habitat restoration and trail work at Lynch Creek/Lynch Canyon, Blue Rock Springs Creek/Hann Park, and Vallejo Swett Ranch, Solano County.
- ♦ Sonoma Ecology Center: One hundred eighteen thousand eight hundred seventy-nine dollars (\$118,879) for riparian restoration at Nathanson Creek, Sonoma County.
- ♦ The Bay Institute: One hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) for habitat restoration at Roseland Creek, Tolay Lake and Sonoma Baylands, Sonoma County; Rio del Mar and York Creek, Napa County; and Tomales Bay and Vineyard Creek, Marin County.
- ♦ The Pacifica Land Trust: Ninety-seven thousand nine hundred dollars (\$97,900) for habitat restoration and trail work at Pedro Point Headlands, San Mateo County.
- ♦ The Watershed Project: Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) for riparian restoration along San Pablo Creek, Contra Costa County.
- ♦ Urban Creeks Council: One hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) for habitat restoration at Rheem Creek, Contra Costa County.
- ♦ Urban Creeks Council: Eighty-six thousand dollars (\$86,000) for habitat restoration and

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trail work at Codornices Creek, Alameda County.

Prior to the disbursement of funds to an individual grantee, that grantee shall submit for the review and approval for the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule, budget, names of subcontractors to be hired, a plan for acknowledging Conservancy funding, and any licensing or other appropriate agreements determined necessary by the Executive Officer for projects restoring natural resources or improving public access on property not owned by the particular grantee.”

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 authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 4.5, (Sections 31160-31165) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Conservancy's mandate to address the resource goals of the San Francisco Bay Area.
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated by the Conservancy on September 20, 2007.
3. Each of the grantees is either: 1) a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code, or 2) a public agency.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This authorization would provide up to \$1,774,681 to 20 different nonprofit organizations and public agencies for community-based, educational, environmental restoration and/or trail building or enhancement projects.

A number of nonprofit organizations and public agencies working on restoration of and access to the San Francisco Bay Area's baylands, coastal habitats, creeks, rivers, and oak woodlands have sought ways to incorporate people, such as students or community volunteers, into habitat restoration and trail building or enhancement work. Environmental restoration and trail work are often excellent forums for teaching people not only an appreciation for the natural world but also basic science and ecological concepts in a “hands-on” way. In addition, these projects empower people by offering opportunities to make positive changes to their local environment.

Conservancy staff solicited proposals for projects that use habitat restoration and/or trail work to educate community members about the environment in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The solicitation was released May 30, 2007 and was widely distributed (Exhibit 2). Thirty-four project proposals were submitted by nonprofit organizations and public agencies as of July 20, 2007, with \$3.5 million in Conservancy funding requested.

Of the 34 proposed projects submitted, 21 are recommended for funding under this grant round for a variety of reasons. All of the recommended projects include habitat restoration and/or trail-building or enhancement activities appropriate for community volunteers or students, such as removal of exotic plants and propagation and planting of native plants or trail work using hand tools. The proposals emphasize well-designed restoration and trail projects as the centerpiece of

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their environmental education programs. The natural resources to be restored or enhanced reflect the diversity of habitat types in the Bay Area, including tidal wetlands, coastal scrub, riparian corridors, and oak savannah. The trail building or enhancement projects involve regionally significant trails or local trails connecting to regional trails. All recommended applicants clearly described how the projects would use educational content to make the hands-on experience meaningful to the participants. The recommended projects enjoy a broad base of support. Highly ranked proposals also have a strong likelihood of continuing even when Conservancy funding ends, as indicated by matching funds or years in operation.

Over 22,000 people will be directly served by these proposed projects, which are distributed throughout all nine Bay Area counties. All of the recommended applicants reach out to underserved communities. For example, the schools targeted by some of these programs have high numbers of students eligible for free and reduced-fee lunch programs and other programs specifically target students determined to be at-risk of dropping out of school.

Factors that made proposals less competitive included minimal matching funds, restoration focused on less-than-regionally-significant resources, or restoration or trail projects without a strong hands-on or educational component. Six of the proposed projects not being recommended for funding at this time did not closely meet the intent of the solicitation, in terms of having a strong hands-on, community based component, but were otherwise strong proposals. These are being separately investigated by Conservancy staff for their potential to meet other Strategic Plan objectives and may eventually be individually brought before the Conservancy for potential funding.

Below is a list of the organizations, amounts recommended for funding, the project title and a brief description of the proposed project. As summarized above and described in greater detail below, all of the projects focus on hands-on habitat restoration and/or trail work activities, incorporate lessons about environmental processes, and increase the participants knowledge about local habitats and natural areas.

Acterra

\$72,000

Pearson-Arastradero Preserve Riparian Corridor Restoration Project: A diverse community of volunteers and students will restore the Arastradero Creek Riparian Corridor, including invasive plant control and revegetation, which will provide a healthy habitat link between Arastradero and The Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Berryessa Trails & Conservation

\$80,000

Berryessa Community Projects: Local volunteers will remove invasive species and replant native species, clear trail corridors and construct trail segments within the Lake Berryessa Recreation Area.

California Department of Parks and Recreation

\$50,000

San Mateo Coast Volunteer Restoration Program: Volunteers will increase native wildlife habitat and protect biological diversity by removing exotic plants, propagating native plants, and cleaning up the river and beach at Half Moon Bay State Beach and Pigeon Point Light Station.

California State Parks Foundation

\$60,000

Bay Youth for the Environment - Yosemite Slough Wetlands Restoration: Students and

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volunteers will restore wetlands, involving collection/growing of native seeds for native grass restoration, transition zone re-vegetation, and tree plantings at strategic sites throughout Candlestick Point State Recreation Area.

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) \$50,000

Watershed Oak Savannah Restoration: Students and other community members will protect watersheds, restore wildlife habitat, and improve biodiversity along the Bay Area Ridge Trail by restoring oak savannah habitat in the flats surrounding EBMUD's creek restorations throughout their watershed lands.

Friends of Sausal Creek \$32,000

Creating Regional Appeal and Environmental Educational Opportunities in the Sausal Creek Watershed: Volunteers will restore a section of Dimond Park along Sausal Creek, including planting California native plants and improving public access, recreation, and education along the creek.

Golden Gate Audubon Society \$90,000

Eco-Oakland Program: Students and community members will reverse environmental degradation in East Oakland through restoration work and by engaging the community in protecting their local watershed. The focus will be on key habitats within the San Leandro Bay watershed, to clean and restore through trash removal, invasive plant removal, and planting of native species.

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy \$120,000

Hands-On Restoration at Redwood Creek and Presidio Trail Building: Students and volunteers will manage exotic vegetation, revegetate with natives, and control erosion at Redwood Creek, and will also renew and expand the system of trails in the Presidio to link key visitor venues, programmatic sites, and park landscapes.

Literacy for Environmental Justice \$90,000

Educational/Community-Based Hands-On Habitat Restoration at Heron's Head Park: Community members and students will restore wetlands at Heron's Head Park by controlling invasives and revegetating to improve soil quality and habitat for wildlife, including nesting migratory bird populations.

Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space \$36,100

Bothin Marsh Enhancement and Education Program: As part of a larger program to restore Bothin Marsh, students and community members will enhance existing habitat in the north basin through eradication of invasive plants and revegetation of upland cover on the outer levees. The project will include seed collection, invasive plant removal, plant propagation and revegetation.

Marin Conservation Corps \$120,000

Lower Redwood Creek Floodplain & Salmonid Habitat Restoration Project at the Banducci Site: The Marin Conservation Corps and community volunteers will conduct instream and riparian habitat restoration to enhance critical habitat for endangered coho salmon and other federally listed species in coastal Marin County.

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Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District \$100,000
Local Community Taking Action to Enhance the Napa River Ecological Reserve for Wildlife Habitat and Recreational Open Space: Community members and students will enhance and improve habitat and open space conditions at the under-utilized Napa River Ecological Reserve. Intensive habitat mapping, planning, and restoration will occur on the west side of the Napa River. Also, an existing trail at the site will be made accessible to persons with disabilities.

San Mateo County Department of Parks \$38,122
San Bruno Mountain Volunteer Trail Project: Community volunteers will do hands-on trail work to rehabilitate two seriously neglected trails at San Bruno Mountain.

Save San Francisco Bay Association (“Save the Bay”) \$125,000
San Francisco Bay Community-Based Restoration Projects: Students and volunteers will revegetate and enhance tidal salt marsh vegetation diversity and abundance for the benefit of fish, shorebirds, and other wildlife for a suite of five well-developed wetland restoration projects.

Solano Resource Conservation District (RCD) \$148,680
Solano County Community Based Habitat Restoration & Environmental Education Program: Students and other community members will plant native shrub and trees, install irrigation, collect seeds, enhance native plant communities, reduce erosion, and implement stream biomonitoring to protect and enhance the Suisun Marsh Wetland and the Bay Delta Estuary. Participants will also enhance a section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Sonoma Ecology Center \$118,879
Community Hands On Nathanson Creek: Students, families, and other community members will restore a section of Nathanson Creek's riparian vegetation communities.

The Bay Institute \$120,000
North Bay Priority Riparian & Estuarine Natural Resource Restoration Project (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed [STRAW]): Students, teachers, and volunteers will conduct riparian and estuarine habitat restoration activities in the San Pablo Baylands, Laguna de Santa Rosa, Tomales Bay, and Napa River Watersheds.

The Pacifica Land Trust \$97,900
Pedro Point Headlands Invasives/Erosion Control and Trail Enhancement: A Pedro Point Headland volunteer-based stewardship program will be developed and implemented to solve Coastal Trail-access issues; make existing trails safe through rails, signage, etc.; prevent erosion; and enhance native habitat restoration. This will create an interim recreational use of the property compatible with a long term vision of a public open space network.

The Watershed Project \$20,000
Restoration and Stewardship of Riparian Ecosystems along the San Pablo Creek: San Pablo Watershed Neighbors Education and Restoration Society (SPAWNERS) will collect seeds propagate plants, and create and install interpretive signs along a section of San Pablo Creek.

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Urban Creeks Council

\$120,000

Rheem Creek Restoration and Watershed Education Project: Students and other community members will restore native riparian habitat, including clearing invasive vegetation, controlling erosion, and installing plants along Rheem Creek.

Urban Creeks Council

\$86,000

Codornices Creek Watershed Project: As part of a larger riparian and creek restoration effort, the Codornices Creek Watershed Council, project partners and volunteers will plant native vegetation and make trail improvements at Codornices Creek.

Site Description: All of the project sites are within at least one of the nine counties under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Most of the projects will take place on publicly held lands or lands owned by nonprofit organizations, such as land trusts. A few will take place on private lands and the property owners will enter licensing agreements or other appropriate agreements with the grantee and the Conservancy. See Exhibit 1 for a regional map depicting the location of all of the projects.

Project History: The Conservancy has funded various environmental education projects in the past because they promote public access to natural resources, involve and inform community members about environmental restoration, and build a constituency for stewardship of natural resources. Past projects have included numerous grants for planning, construction, and programming at environmental education and visitor centers along the coast and San Francisco Bay. In addition, the Conservancy has had several competitive grant rounds that have awarded funds to education projects focusing on the restoration of coastal or Bay natural resources, such as the Nonprofit Program's Small Grants Rounds 1 and 2 (August 1996 and June 1997), the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project's Small Grants Program (2001 to 2007) and the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program's Environmental Restoration and Education Projects Grant Round (August 2003). The education projects funded through these grant rounds involved activities similar to what is proposed for the restoration projects in this staff recommendation; that is, they focused on people collecting, growing, and planting native species and removing invasive exotic species in order to both learn about and restore natural resources.

PROJECTS FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,774,681
Other sources	12,030,917*
In kind	<u>1,073,574</u>
Total Projects Cost	\$14,879,172

* Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy's Hands-On Restoration at Redwood Creek and Presidio Trail Building project has a match of \$10,107,350.

The anticipated source of funds will be the fiscal year 07/08 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)

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appropriation for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Consistent with Chapter 10 of the Act (see Public Resources Code Sec. 75071), in evaluating the projects that involve restoration for the purpose of natural resource protection, the Conservancy gave priority to projects for which there is a non-state matching contribution toward the restoration, stewardship or management costs.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

These projects are undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31165, to address resource and recreational goals in the San Francisco Bay Area. In order to benefit the San Francisco Bay region, the Conservancy may undertake projects and award grants for activities that are compatible with the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of ocean, coastal, bay, or watershed resources, or that facilitate environmental education related to these resources (Section 31165). The proposed projects will protect, restore, and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional importance as called for in Section 31162(b). The projects that include trail activities will improve public access through completion and operation of regional trail systems and local trails connecting to population centers, consistent with Section 31162(a). Furthermore, by bringing urban community members to the wetland, riparian, oak woodland, and coastal areas of the Bay Area and engaging them in restoration and trail work, the organizations proposed for funding will “promote, assist, and enhance projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes,” consistent with Section 31162(d).

These restoration and trail projects involve extensive cooperation between private landowners, public agencies, and nonprofit environmental organizations, providing for broad-based local involvement, and support for, the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program, consistent with Section 31163(b). The projects would also meet the criteria established in Section 31163(c), as the projects serve a regional constituency, can be implemented in a timely way, provide opportunities for restoration projects and educational programs that would be lost if not quickly implemented, and include matching funds.

For those projects with participants that include school students, the educational component of these restoration and trail projects is consistent with Chapter 3, Section 31119(a)(1) which states, “The conservancy may undertake educational projects and programs for pupils in kindergarten to grade 12, inclusive, relating to the preservation, protection, enhancement, and maintenance of coastal resources, and may award grants to nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and public agencies for those purposes...” The organizations proposed for funding will directly preserve, protect, enhance, and maintain coastal resources by engaging students in hands-on restoration projects and will teach them why their work benefits the environment.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2007
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal #1, Objective D** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to construct approximately 93 miles of trails, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy's trail building project at the Presidio will develop approximately 4.3 miles of inland trails that connect to the coast.

Consistent with **Goal #5, Objective B** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to restore and enhance 6,820 acres of coastal habitats, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- California Department of Parks and Recreation (Half Moon Bay State Beach & Pigeon Point Light Station): 5 acres
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Redwood Creek): 1.7 acres
- Marin Conservation Corps (Redwood Creek): 2 acres

Consistent with **Goal #5, Objective D** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to implement 16 projects that target prevention, control or eradication of non-native invasive species that threaten important coastal habitats, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- California Department of Parks and Recreation (Half Moon Bay; Pigeon Point)
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Redwood Creek)
- Marin Conservation Corps (Redwood Creek)

Consistent with **Goal #6, Objective B** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to implement 49 projects to preserve and restore coastal watersheds, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy restoration project at Redwood Creek will improve 1.7 acres of habitat and other resources within a coastal watershed.

Consistent with **Goal #10, Objective C** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to restore or enhance approximately 10,000 acres of wetlands habitat throughout the nine Bay Area counties, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- California State Parks Foundation (Candlestick Point): 5 acres
- Golden Gate Audubon Society (Arrowhead Marsh): 0.5 acre
- Literacy for Environmental Justice (Heron's Head Park): 24 acres
- Marin Co. Dept. of Parks & Open Space (Bothin Marsh): 3 acres
- Save the Bay (MLK Shoreline; Eden Landing; Bair Is.; Santa Venitia Marsh): 48 acres

Consistent with **Goal #10, Objective F** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to restore or enhance approximately 5,000 acres of uplands habitat throughout the nine Bay Area counties, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- California State Parks Foundation (Candlestick Point): 5 acres
- EBMUD (Oak savannah): 69 acres
- Berryessa Trails and Conservation: 5 acres

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Consistent with **Goal #10, Objective H** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to restore or enhance approximately 10 linear miles of riparian or riverine habitat throughout the nine Bay Area counties, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- Acterra (Arastradero Creek): 0.2 mile
- California State Parks Foundation (Candlestick Point): 0.3 mile
- Friends of Sausal Creek: 0.5 mile
- Golden Gate Audubon Society: 3.2 miles
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Redwood Creek): 0.7 mile
- Marin Conservation Corps (Redwood Creek): 0.3 mile
- Napa Co. Reg. Park and Open Space Dist. (Napa River): 0.2 mile
- Solano RCD (Lynch Creek, Blue Rock Springs Creek): 0.6 mile
- Sonoma Ecology Center (Nathanson Creek): 0.5 mile
- The Bay Inst. (Roseland Crk; Rio del Mar; York Crk; Vineyard Crk): 0.8 mile
- The Watershed Project (San Pablo Creek): 0.08 mile
- Urban Creeks Council (Rheem Creek): 0.09 mile
- Urban Creeks Council (Codornices Creek): 0.4 mile

Consistent with **Goal #10, Objective K** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to implement 5 projects or programs to prevent, control, or eradicate non-native invasive species that threaten important habitats in the San Francisco Bay Area, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- Acterra
- Berryessa Trails & Conservation
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- California State Parks Foundation
- EBMUD
- Friends of Sausal Creek
- Golden Gate Audubon Society
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
- Literacy for Environmental Justice
- Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space
- Marin Conservation Corps
- Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
- Save the Bay
- Solano RCD
- Sonoma Ecology Center
- The Bay Institute
- The Pacifica Land Trust
- The Watershed Project
- Urban Creeks Council

Consistent with **Goal #11, Objective I** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, which seeks to construct approximately 50 miles of regionally significant public access trails and community connectors, including links between the Bay Trail, Ridge Trail, and Coastal Trail and links

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between regional trails and urban communities, the following projects will contribute to this goal:

- Berryessa Trails & Conservation: 4 miles
- California State Parks Foundation: 0.6 mile
- Friends of Sausal Creek: 1 mile
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Presidio): 4.3 miles

Consistent with **Goal #11, Objective M** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, this authorization will implement 21 projects that create, expand, or improve educational or interpretive programs that are tied to on-the-ground restoration projects or trail construction or enhancement and which are available to the urban population of the Bay Area.

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

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on September 20, 2007, 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:** The broad level of support for environmental education, restoration, and trail-work activities is indicated by the large numbers of people that will participate in these programs. It is estimated that over 22,000 people from around the Bay will participate in these projects. In addition, all of the selected applicants submitted letters from others recommending their projects. Representative samples of support letters are provided in Exhibit 3.
4. **Location:** All projects are within the nine county jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
5. **Need:** The grant applicants expressed significant difficulty in finding funding for their projects. Without Conservancy funding, these organizations would have to significantly scale back the scope of their proposed activities, with commensurate reduction in benefits to environmental education, restoration, and public access.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The projects to be funded by this authorization would serve communities throughout the Bay Area, provide for restoration of nearly every major habitat type found in the region, and provide significant public access to open space areas for educational and recreational purposes. Staff estimates that over 22,000 people would be involved in these restoration and trail-building projects in every county of the Bay Area.

Additional Criteria

8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The projects will provide multiple benefits by fulfilling various environmental education, stewardship, habitat restoration and trail building and/or enhancement needs throughout the Bay Area.
9. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
12. **Readiness:** Grantees have started preparing their projects since notification of their selection through the solicitation process in September and will be ready to start in January 2008 if funding is approved in December 2007.
14. **Return to Conservancy:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
15. **Cooperation:** The grantees have secured the cooperation of resource agencies, funding entities, restoration professionals, and volunteers in order to carry out their projects.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The following grantees have project sites that are located in the Coastal Zone and are subject to Local Coastal Programs (LCPs). These are:

Marin County:

- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (Redwood Creek)
- Marin Conservation Corps (Redwood Creek)
- The Bay Institute (Tomales Bay)

San Mateo County:

- California Department of Parks and Recreation (Half Moon Bay State Beach and Pigeon Point Light Station)
- The Pacifica Land Trust (Pedro Point Headlands)

Marin County Projects:

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 31252, all areas proposed for resource enhancement should be identified in a certified local coastal plan or program as requiring public action to resolve existing or potential resource problems. The Unit II LCP for Marin County, certified on April 1, 1981, cites water quality and sediment pollution in Tomales Bay as significant problems requiring amelioration. The Marin LCP encourages “responsible agencies to continue working on identifying sources of pollution in Tomales Bay and to take steps to eliminate them” (LCP II-II, p. 72). Though not specifically mentioned, the unnamed tributary that flows into Tomales Bay in Marshall meets the criteria of coastal streams established within the LCP, and is therefore subject to the protections, goals, and objectives afforded by Public Resources Code Section 30231 (Coastal Act) which establishes that “the biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters...shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored...” (LCP II-I, p. 56).

The Marin County Local Coastal Program Unit II Land Use Plan identifies Marin County’s numerous coastal zone streams and creeks as sensitive habitats for many species of birds and fish. The Unit II LCP identifies freshwater inflows, sedimentation, water pollution, and protection of riparian habitats as the key concerns for protecting the aquatic resources of the Tomales Bay ecosystem. Because the proposed Tomales Bay project will restore riparian habitat

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and mitigate water quality problems in Tomales Bay, the proposed project is consistent with the LCP Policies.

The Redwood Creek project site in Marin County currently consists of federal parkland administered by the National Park Service (NPS), the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The Marin LCP requires that federal parkland in the coastal zone be managed in a manner consistent with the Coastal Act, which requires the restoration of the overall quality of the coastal zone's environment and its natural resources (Public Resources Code Section 30231). The federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 provides that federal lands be legally excluded from the coastal zone and thus exempted from a state's coastal planning and regulatory jurisdiction (16 U.S.C. 1453, Section 304). However, the federal act also provides that federal activities within the coastal zone boundary must be consistent with a state's coastal management program, and advises that federal activities be evaluated through the Coastal Commission's consistency review process (16 U.S.C. 1456, Section 307). Those portions of the project outside of NPS ownership must be found consistent with the LCP.

The Unit I LCP for Marin County provides that federal policies and programs for lands in Marin be evaluated as a whole in the Unit II LCP (LCP I-I, p. 14), which also addresses non-federal policies and programs for the project area, and for areas within the coastal zone boundary.

The proposed Redwood Creek projects will result in the restoration of instream and riparian habitat, which will enhance the scenic values, wildlife habitat value, and public recreation opportunities of the project area. The proposed projects are therefore consistent with Public Resources Code section 30231 (Coastal Act), as follows.

Section 30231 states that "[t]he biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained, and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of groundwater supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams." By planning for the reversal and correction of inappropriate land use practices, the proposed Redwood Creek projects will expand, protect and enhance the aquatic, riparian, and marsh habitats in the project area, benefiting water quality and many plant and wildlife species. The projects are therefore consistent with this section.

San Mateo County Projects:

The Half Moon Bay State Beach and Pigeon Point Light Station habitat restoration project and the Pedro Point Headlands project would further many policies of the County of the San Mateo County LCP. These projects are consistent with Policy 7.35 of the "Sensitive Habitats Component" of the LCP: "preservation of all habitats of rare and endangered species. . . ."

The Pedro Point Headlands project is consistent with Policy 7.31 of the "Sensitive Habitats Component" of the LCP: "Restrict pedestrian traffic in bluff and cliff areas and on faces to a limited number of well-defined trails which avoid seabird nesting and roosting sites;" Policy 10.9 of the "Shoreline Access Component": "Provide safe access to shoreline destinations; discourage public use of hazardous trails; protect sensitive habitat; and Policy 11.13 of the

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“Recreation/Visitor-Serving Facilities Component”: “Establish a trails program for the Coastal Zone with the objective of connecting major shoreline to inland park and recreation facilities and trails, and linking existing and proposed recreation facilities along the coast.” The project will protect sensitive habitat by providing and directing public access along a Coastal Trail so that environmentally sensitive areas are avoided, scenic views are protected, and the public has access to the shoreline for recreation.

CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:

The projects that are within the jurisdiction of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) are:

- California State Parks Foundation (Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, San Francisco County)
- Golden Gate Audubon Society (Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline, Alameda County)
- Literacy for Environmental Justice (Heron’s Head Park, San Francisco County)
- Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space (Bothin Marsh, Marin County)
- Save San Francisco Bay Association (Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline and Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, Alameda County; Bair Island, San Mateo County; and Santa Venetia Marsh, Marin County)
- The Bay Institute (Sonoma Baylands, Sonoma County)

Consistent with Part III policy 1 of BCDC’s San Francisco Bay Plan (January 2006), these projects will restore tidal marshes and tidal flats to assure the benefits of fish, other aquatic organisms and wildlife for future generations. Consistent with Part III, policy 6 of the Bay Plan, these habitat restoration projects will not use non-native species.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed projects are exempt from review of impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21000 *et seq.*). All of the projects are exempt under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Sections 15301(i) (minor alteration of existing facilities) and 15304 (minor alterations to land). Section 15301(i) exempts the maintenance of wildlife areas and stream channels to protect fish and wildlife resources. The habitat restoration and trail projects will maintain fish and/or wildlife habitat by removing invasive exotic species that degrade native wildlife and fish habitat, planting native plants, and/or by building or enhancing trails to minimize erosion and other potential adverse impacts. Section 15304 exempts the minor public or private alterations in the conditions of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy mature scenic trees. The projects involve community members using hand tools to remove exotic species, grow and plant native species, and build and enhance trails. This work will not entail removal of scenic trees, nor will the projects remove species that would require permits from regulatory agencies.

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Most of the projects that include habitat restoration activities (grantees: Acterra; Berryessa Trails & Conservation; California Department of Parks and Recreation; California State Parks Foundation; Friends of Sausal Creek; Golden Gate Audubon Society; Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy; Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space; Marin Conservation Corps; Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District; Solano RCD; Sonoma Ecology Center; The Bay Institute; The Watershed Project; and the Urban Creeks Council) are categorically exempt from CEQA in that the projects consist of small habitat restoration, enhancement, maintenance, and protection for fish, plants, or wildlife (14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15333). These projects satisfy all of the criteria under Section 15333 as follows: 1) the projects do not exceed five acres in size, 2) there will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitat, 3) there are no hazardous materials at or around the project sites that may be disturbed or removed, and 4) the projects will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

The projects that include trail improvements (grantees: Napa County Regional Park & Open Space District; San Mateo County Department of Parks; Solano RCD; The Pacifica Land Trust; and the Urban Creeks Council [Codornices Creek project]) are categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA. Improvements to existing trails are exempt under 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301, which exempts repair, maintenance, and minor alteration of existing structures and facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond existing conditions; and Section 15302, which exempts replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

Upon Conservancy approval, staff will file Notices of Exemption.