

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
May 24, 2007

WHEELCHAIR RIDER'S ONLINE COASTAL GUIDE

File No. 07-023-01
Project Manager: Joan Cardellino

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Access Northern California to prepare *A Wheelchair Rider's Online Coastal Guide*.

LOCATION: San Diego, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, Del Norte

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code regarding public access to the coast:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to Access Northern California to prepare an internet-based guide to coastal sites accessible by wheelchair. Prior to disbursement of Conservancy funds for this project, Access Northern California shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer the names and qualifications of any contractors proposed to be hired, a project work program, schedule and budget, and a proposal for acknowledging the Conservancy’s assistance in developing the guide.”

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 Public Resources Code Sections 31400-31409.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. Access Northern California is nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes, which include providing people with

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disabilities information about wheelchair accessible travel destinations, are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Access Northern California (ANC) for the purpose of preparing a web-based guide to coastal sites accessible by wheelchair. The proposed project is intended to increase the use and expand the amount of wheelchair accessible public facilities along the coast. The project has two components. The first entails preparing and publishing a web-based guide to coastal sites accessible to wheelchair users. The second entails identifying sites where barrier-free facilities should be installed so that wheelchair accessible opportunities can be expanded.

People with impaired mobility are far more likely to venture out into parks and other natural places if they have site-specific information about these places. Simply designating these places as “wheelchair accessible” does not suffice. The *Wheelchair Rider's Online Coastal Guide* will provide essential details for the visitor using a wheelchair or having other mobility impairments. The *Guide* will be entirely web-based, and will be available on ANC's website. It will be designed to be searchable and downloadable in print-friendly format, and will encourage user-generated content to keep the information up to date. A link to the site will be posted on the Conservancy's website.

ANC will conduct site visits to identify existing wheelchair facilities, as well as opportunities and constraints for new or improved facilities. ANC's policy is to use wheelchair users for all of the field study and user review of site descriptions. Additionally, ANC will consult with local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for access compliance.

ANC was founded in 1997 in response to the inequities and difficulties experienced by seniors and people with disabilities when traveling and recreating outdoors. ANC maintains a website that provides hard-to-find, accurate accessibility information about recreation and travel (see www.accessnca.com). ANC also conducts disability awareness trainings and workshops to educate wheelchair riders about travel and recreation opportunities. ANC also writes travel and outdoor recreation-related articles and advocates for greater accessibility.

Site Description: The two-year project will begin with the southern and central coast counties, and will include coastal parks, trails, piers and other coastal recreational sites.

Project History: ANC staff worked on the Conservancy's publication *A Wheelchair Rider's Guide: San Francisco Bay and the Nearby Coast*, which was published in 2006. During the course of that effort, ANC approached Conservancy staff with a proposal to create an on-line wheelchair rider's guide to coastal sites throughout the coastal zone, where no comparable guides currently exist. ANC's idea was to use wheelchair riders exclusively to research the sites and make the publication web-based only, i.e., no hard

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copies of the guide would be published. Readers will be able to search the site for the specific information they want, and print it out in an easily readable format.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$100,000
Total Project Cost	\$100,000

Anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the Violation Remediation Account, which is funded by penalties assessed under the Coastal Act on property owners that violate coastal development permit conditions. Funds collected are appropriated by the legislature to the Conservancy for use on projects that provide public access or restore habitats.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This authorization is consistent with Public Resources Code Section 31400.3 which states that "The Conservancy may provide such assistance as is required to aid public agencies and nonprofit organizations in establishing a system of public coastal accessways, and related functions necessary to meet the objectives of this division." ANC seeks to provide public facilities which meet the needs of wheelchair riders. This project will increase the knowledge of existing wheelchair accessible facilities, and will identify coastal recreational areas in need of such facilities, thereby better serving wheelchair riders and many other members of the public as well.

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

This project is consistent with **Goal 11, Objective D** in that it will increase public information about existing wheelchair accessible facilities and lead to the implementation of additional such facilities.

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.

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2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
3. **Support of the public:** Letters of support are included in Exhibit 1.
4. **Location:** As a web-based information system, this project is not located in the coastal zone, but will provide information about essential facilities at recreation areas within the coastal zone.
5. **Need:** Little information is currently available about wheelchair accessible visitor destination points on the coast. Partly due to the aging population, but for other reasons as well, the need for this kind of information is growing, and having it available free on the web will ensure that it is widely disseminated.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The information proposed to be gathered through this project will focus on regional coastal facilities and will eventually cover all the coastal counties.

Additional Criteria

11. **Innovation:** The ability to put user-generated content on the website is innovative and likely to attract more attention by people concerned about this particular issue.
12. **Readiness:** ANC is ready to begin work immediately.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

Providing information on a website does not constitute a “project” for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act under Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines.