

## COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
March 27, 2014

### **SOSCAL FERRY ROAD TO ANSELMO COURT BAY TRAIL CONSTRUCTION**

Project No. 07-063-42  
Project Manager: Ann Buell

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse up to \$120,000 (one hundred twenty thousand dollars) of previously granted Conservancy funds to the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District to construct 0.8 miles of multi-use public trail between the cities of Napa and American Canyon, Napa County.

**LOCATION:** Soscol Ferry Road, City of Napa and County of Napa

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

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#### **EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps and Photographs](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Napa River and Bay Trail - Soscol Ferry Road to Anselmo Court Negative Declaration](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

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#### **RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse up to \$120,000 (one hundred twenty thousand dollars) of previously granted Conservancy funds to the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District to construct 0.8 miles of multi-use trail between the cities of Napa and American Canyon, Napa County, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, ABAG shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule and budget, and a grant agreement between ABAG and the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District.
2. ABAG shall ensure installation of signs acknowledging the Conservancy and displaying the Conservancy logo in a manner approved by the Executive Officer.
3. In carrying out the project, ABAG shall ensure compliance by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District with all project actions and components that are needed to

reduce or avoid significant environmental effects of the trail improvements as identified in the negative declaration adopted by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and accompanying the project staff recommendation as Exhibit 2.”

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 Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165, regarding San Francisco Bay.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the negative declaration for the proposed project adopted by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District on March 8, 2010 pursuant to CEQA and finds no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment.”

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#### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize ABAG to disburse up to \$120,000 of previously granted Conservancy funds (known as “San Francisco Bay Trail Block Grant #4”) to the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District (NCRPOSD) to construct 0.8 miles of multi-use public trail between the cities of Napa and American Canyon, in Napa County. The trail segment will be located along the Napa River to the east of the Union Pacific Railroad; it will begin at Soscol Ferry Road, a public way, and end near Anselmo Court, also a public way (Exhibit 1). Project construction is expected to begin in July, 2014 and be complete by September, 2014.

This proposed segment of the Bay Trail (and concurrently the Napa River Trail) will eventually provide the only non-motorized trail link between the cities of American Canyon and Napa and will provide exceptional bird viewing, as well as interpretation and educational opportunities.

The trail will be eight-feet wide with an additional one-foot shoulder and will be constructed out of stabilized quarry fines, which is a semi-permeable, stable surface. The stabilizing emulsion will be environmentally safe, water-based, non-corrosive and biodegradable, and specified to cure to a water-insoluble, binding agent. The trail will be built in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Parking is available on Soscol Ferry Road.

The trail will be built on an existing levee/service road and on existing dirt trails. An insignificant amount of earthmoving is proposed as part of the project to flatten the trail surface prior to applying stabilized quarry fines. A pedestrian gate will be constructed at a Soscol Ferry Road access point to allow passage around a border fence on the property of Napa Sanitation District. A second pedestrian gate will block unauthorized vehicle access from the Anselmo Court end of the trail. Plans include the installation of a six-foot security fence where the trail is

adjacent to the railroad tracks. A four-strand wire wildlife fence will be installed to protect wetland areas (Exhibit 1).

The railroad levee helps to protect the project area from flooding, but during extreme flood events the Napa River overtops the levee. The planned improvements in the flood area will not be damaged by flooding. Maintenance may be necessary after a flood event to sweep the trail surface clean of any silt that may have been deposited; the NCRPOSD is committed to maintenance of the trail. The gates at both ends of the trail will be closed and locked before and during flood events so that the public cannot enter the area.

While construction of this segment will not close all remaining gaps in the Bay Trail in this area, this segment of trail does close one of the gaps in both the Napa River and Bay Trail Project alignments. The proposed trail is a viable stand-alone segment, and will be useful regardless of whether the larger trail project is completed. The remaining uncompleted portion of the Napa River and Bay Trail project includes 1.6 miles of waterfront at the Napa Pipe site directly adjacent to the north. Once that segment is constructed in two to three years, the Napa Pipe segment will connect to existing Bay Trail at Kennedy Park and the Maxwell Bridge on Imola Drive, resulting in six miles of continuous Bay Trail from Soscol Ferry Road to Imola Drive to the north. To the south of the subject project, Napa Sanitation District has expressed an interest in hosting a 2.6-mile segment of trail.

**Site Description:** The proposed project encompasses three legal parcels that contain wetlands and grasslands typically found along the Napa River. There is an existing dirt road on one of the parcels and dirt trails on the other two parcels that will be utilized to create this segment of the Napa River and Bay Trail. The upland areas are covered mainly by introduced annual grasses and coyote bush. On the parcels adjacent to the Napa Valley Corporate Park, there are native trees that were planted as part of a separate restoration project. There are several isolated patches of wetlands on either side of the proposed trail alignment (Exhibit 1). These wetlands are associated with the Napa River and with two wetlands that were created as part of past mitigation for the adjacent Napa Valley Corporate Park, approximately 19 years ago. One of the created wetlands is a tidal lagoon connected to the Napa River via tide gates under the railroad embankment levee, and the other is a small freshwater pond receiving local runoff. A service road on top of a berm separates the tidal lagoon from the freshwater pond, and the trail will be placed on this service road. The proposed trail alignment will entirely avoid the wetlands.

The proposed trail alignment is near the Napa Sanitation District, 1.2 miles from the Napa County Airport, and partially adjacent to the Union Pacific Rail Line, which parallels the Napa River, and is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code §65962.5. It begins at Soscol Ferry Road, on Napa County Right-of-Way, proceeds over land owned by Caltrans as part of the State Highway 29 corridor, and connects to land owned by VCC-Napa (Napa Valley Corporate Park), which is near Anselmo Court, a public way. NCRPOSD has an easement from VCC-Napa, a use agreement with the County of Napa, and it will acquire an encroachment permit from Caltrans before implementing the project.

This proposed segment of the trail is partially within Napa County and partially within the City of Napa. The project is within AW (Agricultural Watershed) and AC (Airport Compatibility) Napa County zoning, and AR (Agricultural Resource) City of Napa zoning. The portion of the trail within the County of Napa is in the “Cities and Public Institutional” section of the General

Plan. The portion in the City of Napa is in the “Resource Area” section of the City of Napa General Plan.

**Project History:** This project builds on the Conservancy-funded Napa River Bay Trail Planning Study, completed in 2007, which evaluated multiple alignments for the Bay Trail between American Canyon and downtown Napa. The proposed trail construction project between Soscol Ferry Road and close to Anselmo Court was referred to as Segments 7 & 8 in the study. The study evaluated design approaches compatible with existing operations and trail user safety, identification of wetlands, engineering and design approaches for constrained areas, Right of Way and ownership issues, cost estimates, coordination with property owners, drainage, hydrology, and geotechnical conditions. CEQA and permitting work were performed by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District at the conclusion of the study.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	\$120,000
Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District	109,500
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$229,500</b>

The Conservancy’s contribution is proposed as a portion of a \$6,000,000 Conservancy grant to ABAG known as the San Francisco Bay Trail Block Grant #4, which was first authorized on September 20, 2007 and augmented on December 4, 2008. Conservancy funds for Block Grant #4 are derived from the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84). These funds are available for San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program projects that promote access to and enjoyment of coastal resources, and are thus appropriate for funding improvements to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

The County of Napa is providing an easement and the Napa Valley Corporate Park is also providing an easement.

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

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165 regarding San Francisco Bay.

Consistent with Section 31162(a) and (c), the Conservancy will award a grant to build a bicycle and pedestrian (multi-use) pathway and complete a segment of the Bay Trail to improve public access to and around the bay, help implement the San Francisco Bay Plan and complete a regional trail system (the San Francisco Bay Trail), without adversely impacting agricultural operations, environmentally sensitive areas, or wildlife. Consistent with Section 31162(d), constructing this segment of Bay Trail will enhance public access to the Napa River, a natural area that is accessible to the urban populations of the Bay Area. Consistent with Section 31163(c), the proposed authorization will be used to fund an outdoor recreational project that is supported by adopted regional plans (County of Napa General Plan, County of Napa Countywide Bicycle Master Plan, City of Napa Bicycle Master Plan, NCRPOSD Master Plan, and San

Francisco Bay Trail Plan), serves a regional constituency, can be implemented in a timely way, provides the opportunity for using matching funds that could become unavailable, and includes matching contributions from other sources in the form of easements.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 12, Objective E** of the Conservancy's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project helps to complete 0.8 miles of San Francisco Bay Trail.

Consistent with **Goal 12, Objective L** of the Conservancy's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project helps implement a segment of trail that will have barrier-free access to a natural 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 November 10, 2011, 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 has received broad public support. See "Project Letters," Exhibit 3.
4. **Location:** The project is located in southern Napa County, which is one of the nine Bay Area counties served by the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
5. **Need:** The proposed project could not be constructed without Conservancy participation.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The Bay Trail is a regional, nine-county trail network that will be approximately 500-miles long when completed. This authorization will help further the completion of the trail, of which approximately 330 miles have been completed to-date. This particular segment will help connect the City of Napa to the City of American Canyon.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** This project is near the Napa River and within a Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) 100-year floodplain (per FEMA 2010 maps). The trail will be exposed to increased flooding by mid-century, per BCDC's sea level rise (SLR) predictions of 16" by 2050, and 55" by 2100. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flooding Impacts maps of the area similarly indicate increased frequency of flood events, showing that with about two feet of SLR, some parts of the trail on the east side of the wetland will be affected, and with three feet of SLR, the section of trail under the Highway 29 bridge will also experience more

frequent inundation. Between the proposed project and the Napa River there is a raised, active Union Pacific Railroad line, which currently serves as a buffer between the Napa River and the closest sections of the trail. Flood protection measures for the benefit of the railroad levee and line may or may not be taken in the future, but if protective measures are taken, the proposed project will benefit as well. The proposed trail improvements will be maintained for a minimum of 20 years. See “Project Summary,” above, for additional details on trail stability, site maintenance, and public safety in relation to site flooding.

### **Additional Criteria**

8. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
9. **Readiness:** The NCRPOSD is ready to begin construction this July.
10. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” above.
11. **Return to Conservancy:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
12. **Cooperation:** There is a high level of cooperation between the County of Napa, City of Napa, City of American Canyon (to which trail will eventually be linked), adjacent land owners, and the NCRPOSD.
13. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** The trail surface (stabilized quarry fines) will be firm and inert. Increased frequency and intensity of storm events and/or droughts should not affect the viability of trail design and use.
14. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The proposed project will minimize greenhouse gas emissions because it will use an existing road and existing trails. As a result, only an insignificant amount of earthmoving will be needed, to flatten the trail surface prior to applying stabilized quarry fines, compared to if the project had entailed construction of a new trail on previously unaltered land. NCRPOSD will follow Best Management Practices (Exhibit 2, Table 2) in addition to implementing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Spill Control and Counter Measures Plan (SCCP) for the project.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:**

The proposed project is consistent with the applicable policies contained in Part IV, Development of the Bay and Shoreline: Findings and Policies, of the San Francisco Bay Plan adopted by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in 1969, as amended.

Public Access Policy No. 9, page 69, states:

Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available. Diverse and interesting public access experiences should be provided which would encourage users to remain in the designated access areas to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat.

Consistent with Public Access Policy No. 9, the proposed project will provide improved access between Soscol Ferry Road and Anselmo Court, with parking available at the side of the road.

Public Access Policy No. 11, page 69, states that federal, state, regional and local jurisdictions, special districts and BCDC should cooperate to provide appropriately-sited, designed and managed public access, especially to link the entire series of shoreline parks, regional trail systems and existing public access areas to the extent feasible without additional Bay filling and without significant adverse effects on Bay natural resources. Closing gaps between existing public access areas is a high priority for funding. The proposed project is consistent with this policy because it provides appropriate and necessary trail improvements in connection with closing a gap in the Bay Trail and Napa River Trail, and does so without significant adverse effects on Bay natural resources.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

In order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the NCRPOSD completed an initial study on January 25, 2010 and posted a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration on January 29, 2010. The NCRPOSD adopted the negative declaration on March 8, 2010, filed a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk, County of Napa on March 9, 2010, and paid the filing fee for this negative declaration to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife on March 9, 2010.

The negative declaration for the proposed project analyzed the following resource areas:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

The negative declaration indicated that there were “no potential impacts” for all but four of the resource areas listed above.

The proposed project was found to have “less than significant impacts” for the following four resource areas:

- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Transportation/Traffic

To reduce as much as possible any potential impacts in these four resource areas from the implementation of the proposed project, NCRPOSD has integrated mitigating practices and procedures into the project itself. These practices and procedures are identified in the negative declaration and fall within the following eight categories:

- 1) Preconstruction surveys, relocation, and avoidance.
- 2) Construction staging and vehicle maintenance.
- 3) Project construction schedule.
- 4) Worker education.
- 5) Temporary rodent exclusion.
- 6) Permanent open space area fencing.
- 7) Presence of biological monitor.
- 8) Development and implementation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Spill Control and Counter Measures Plan (SCCP). These plans will address site disturbance, vehicle deployment and fueling, maintenance, hazardous materials handling, and erosion and stormwater management control.

In addition, NCRPOSD will use Best Management Practices (BMPs), listed in Table 2 of the Negative Declaration, to prevent direct and indirect impacts to sensitive species and habitats. Finally, NCRPOSD will obtain a biologist's report confirming that the identified actions were taken.

Once completed, the entire Napa River and Bay Trail corridor will provide a safe bicycle and pedestrian route between American Canyon and Napa, encouraging alternative transportation.

Based on review of the negative declaration, Conservancy staff concludes that the proposed project poses no potential for significant environmental impacts. Accordingly, staff recommends that the Conservancy find that the Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the negative declaration and concludes that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. Staff will file a Notice of Determination upon the Conservancy's approval of the project.