

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

May 29, 2014

**Ventura River Parkway – Hatton Acquisition**

Project No. 02-134-02

Project Manager: Sam Jenniches

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$843,000 to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy to acquire and complete a management plan for the 29.38 acre Hatton property along the Ventura River in unincorporated Ventura County

**LOCATION:** Unincorporated area of Meiners Oaks, Ventura County

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Reservation of Significant Coastal Resource Areas

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [Project Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Site Maps](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Site Photo](#)

Exhibit 4: [OVLC Preserves and Other Holdings](#)

Exhibit 5: [Project Letters](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31111 and 31350-31356 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed eight hundred forty three thousand dollars (\$843,000) to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy to acquire and complete a management plan for approximately 29 acres of land commonly known as the Hatton Property (consisting of Ventura County Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 011-0-020-155, 011-0-020-165 and 011-0-020-185, and appurtenant rights) along the Ventura River in Ventura County to protect natural resource, wildlife habitat and open space areas of the property and open the property to public access. This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds for acquisition, the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Coastal Conservancy (Executive Officer) all relevant acquisition documents, including but not limited to the appraisal, environmental assessments, agreement of purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and documents of title necessary to the acquisition.

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2. The OVLC shall pay no more than fair market value for the property.
3. The OVLC shall permanently dedicate the property for habitat and resource protection, open space preservation, and public access (in a manner acceptable to the Executive Officer).
4. In the event the Executive Officer consents to the sale of the residential area of the property, the OVLC shall repay the Coastal Conservancy with the proceeds of the sale, after deducting the grantee’s reasonable costs associated with the preparation, marketing and sale of the residential parcel.
5. The OVLC shall acknowledge Coastal Conservancy funding by erecting and maintaining on the property, or at another approved location, a sign that has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Officer.
6. Prior to disbursement of funds for preparation of the management plan, the OVLC shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer a work plan and the names and qualifications of any contractors that the grantee intends to employ to carry out that project.”

Staff further recommends that the Coastal 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 8 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31350-31356) regarding reservation of significant coastal resource areas and with Section 31111 regarding the funding of plans.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is a nonprofit organization existing under the provisions of Section 501(c) (3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and its purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

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### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

This project would provide funds to enable the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) to acquire and prepare a management plan for approximately 29 acres of property along the Ventura River in the Meiners Oaks area of unincorporated Ventura County for habitat and open space preservation. The project site, located at 1250 Meyers Road and commonly known as the Hatton property, consists of Ventura County Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 011-0-020-155, 011-0-020-165 and 011-0-020-185 and the associated appurtenant rights to those parcels. (See Exhibits 2 and 3).

The Hatton property is a 29.38 acre parcel in the Ventura River Parkway adjacent to the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy’s Ventura River Preserve. The majority of the property is in a natural state and in the floodplain of the Ventura River. This property would be added to OVLC’s Ventura River Preserve (aka Farmont Ranch) which was acquired in 2003 through a grant from the Coastal Conservancy. (See Exhibit 4).

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Acquisition of the Hatton property would move the Coastal Conservancy, the OVLC, and our partners one step closer to implementing the Ventura River Parkway. Complementing the notable ecological values, the Hatton property is adjacent to some of the most heavily used recreational trails in the Ventura River watershed. For a number of years, the OVLC, the Coastal Conservancy, the Ventura Hillside Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land have worked together to create a river parkway program for the Ventura River---a comprehensive effort to acquire and restore a contiguous corridor of riparian habitat and open space along 15 miles of the river from Matilija Dam and the City of Ojai to the estuary at the mouth of the river. The goal is to create a greenway that would conserve habitat, protect wildlife linkages, manage stormwater, provide trails and interpretive facilities, recharge groundwater and reconnect the river to its floodplain.

The Hatton property includes both land with improvements (e.g., single family residence, small industrial building, residential water well), and pristine upland property. After the acquisition of all 29.38 acres, approximately 6-9 acres including all the improvements would be separated from the 20-23 acres of preserve-quality lands in a lot line adjustment. The management plan for the remaining parcel would provide details as to the optimum size and design of the “residential parcel” to avoid any impacts on the acquisition purposes of the larger parcel. The residential parcel would then be marketed and sold, with the net proceeds returned to the Coastal Conservancy after deducting OVLC’s costs of preparation, marketing and sale of the house parcel. Preparation of the house parcel will include the lot line adjustment, securing the property and any cleanup necessary prior to marketing.

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has secured the right to purchase the property for a sales price of \$800,000 on or before the planned closing date of September 24, 2014. The “inspection period” for the property ends Monday June 2, 2014 at which time a \$25,000 deposit becomes non-refundable. The OVLC is seeking to secure all critical approvals including funding prior to the June date.

\$33,000 from the Conservancy grant will be used to pay for due diligence and other pre-acquisition costs, as well as closing costs and activities associated with marketing the residence parcel for sale. Approximately \$10,000 from the grant will help fund preparation of a management plan that will analyze the site’s resources and prescribe a program for restoration and management of the entire 20-23 acre conservation property.

The OVLC is a non-profit organization qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code with organizational objectives to preserve, protect and enhance the natural resources of the Ojai Valley, a mission it accomplishes through land acquisition, restoration, education, and recreation programs. Since its inception in 1987, the OVLC has protected and managed over 1,850 acres of habitat and open space (see Exhibit 4) and has undertaken several large habitat restoration programs, including an extensive restoration of its 58-acre Ojai Meadows Preserve. As demonstrated by its successful completion of several projects funded by the Conservancy, the OVLC has the necessary experience and expertise to implement the proposed project.

**Site Description:**

The Hatton property is located at 1250 Meyers Rd. along the Ventura River in the Meiners Oaks area of unincorporated Ventura County. It lies entirely within the 100 year floodplain of the Ventura River and includes both land with improvements and undeveloped land. The preserve-quality land (20-23 acres) is relatively undisturbed and hosts a high quality mix of upland grasslands and scrub similar to the floodplain lands of the adjacent Ventura River Preserve. The ephemeral Cozy Dell Creek crosses the property on its way to the Ventura River and is a likely wildlife corridor. Conservation of this property could be particularly valuable in the face of climate change because it ensures the availability of a migration corridor to upland habitats.

If this authorization is approved, the Hatton property will be added to the 1600 acre Ventura River Preserve, the location of some of the most popular recreational trails in the Ventura River Watershed.

**Watershed description**

The Ventura River watershed encompasses about 226 square miles and is roughly 31 miles long from its headwaters in Los Padres National Forest to its outfall into the Pacific. The mainstem of the river, which originates at the confluence of North Fork Matilija Creek and Matilija Creek, is about 15.6 miles long. Downstream of that junction, the river's principal tributaries are San Antonio Creek, Willis Creek, Rice Creek, Coyote Creek and Cañada Larga. (See Exhibit 2).

Because much of the river corridor has retained its rural character, there are numerous intact examples of riparian cottonwood, California black walnut, sycamore and oak woodlands, as well as chaparral, floodplain, and grassland habitats along the river. Habitats in and near the river sustain one of the highest diversities of vertebrates in Southern California; nearly 300 vertebrate species have been seen in the lower reaches of the Ventura River alone. At least 26 special status species inhabit or utilize aquatic, riparian and wetland habitats in the watershed, including 13 species listed as threatened or endangered and 13 California species of special concern. Listed species in the watershed include southern steelhead, tidewater goby, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, California brown pelican, California least tern, peregrine falcon, Belding's savannah sparrow, ringtail, black-shouldered kite, western snowy plover, California red-legged frog, and the California condor.

The major issue within the watershed has been the dramatic decline of southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), a federally-listed endangered species. Until the late 1940's the river ran essentially unimpeded to the ocean, and 4,000 to 5,000 adult steelhead would migrate up the river each year to spawn and rear, creating within the Ventura River one of the largest steelhead runs in the State. But in 1948, the Ventura County Flood Control District built the 198-foot high Matilija Dam to control flooding and alleviate persistent water supply shortages that purportedly plagued the watershed since the 1920s. The dam included no fish passage facility and as a consequence cutoff access to more than half of the historic steelhead spawning habitat in the watershed.

Matilija Dam is a 620-foot wide, concrete arch dam located inland of the coastal zone, about 16 miles upstream from the Pacific and just over half a mile from the confluence of Matilija Creek with the Ventura River. The dam is responsible for a variety of adverse effects on stream ecology and wildlife. The sediment trapped by the dam has deprived downstream reaches of the sand, gravel, and more coarse-grained materials needed to sustain a suitable substrate for fish,

such as riffle and pool formations, sandbars, and secondary channels. The dam blocks flows from the upper watershed and has altered natural stream and habitat dynamics.

A broad coalition of local, state, federal, and private agencies (including the Conservancy) have been working for the past decade to study the feasibility of removing Matilija Dam, finalizing engineering designs, and securing the funding and congressional support needed to complete the project. Removal of the dam would restore fish passage to more than 17 miles of historic spawning and rearing habitat in the upper watershed. It would also restore natural sediment transport downstream and improve sand replenishment at beaches along the coast. The Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Program is one of the largest dam removal projects in the country, as well as one of the largest ecosystem restoration projects ever undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers west of the Mississippi River. When the project is fully implemented, the Ventura River watershed and its related estuarine and ocean habitats offshore will more closely resemble historic conditions.

### **Project History:**

The Coastal Conservancy has partnered with other agencies and nonprofit organizations for many years to protect, enhance and restore the Ventura River watershed. Those efforts include over \$8.4 million in Conservancy grants to help fund the Matilija Dam evaluation project, dam removal feasibility study, and habitat restoration program, as well as grants to other agencies or organizations for such projects as the design and construction of a fish ladder at the Robles Diversion on the mainstem, water quality monitoring and habitat restoration planning in the lower watershed, and a managed retreat project at Surfer's Point just east of the Ventura River estuary.

A major part of the Conservancy's efforts along the Ventura have been directed at assisting the OVLC in acquiring key habitat areas. In 2003 the Conservancy awarded a \$3.1 million grant to enable the OVLC to acquire the 1,556-acre Farmont Ranch along the river, a site now known as the Ventura River Preserve. A year later, the Conservancy provided a \$450,000 grant to assist the OVLC in purchasing fee title to 14 acres and a conservation easement over an additional 16 acres to create the OVLC's Confluence Preserve along the river at its junction with San Antonio Creek. That property includes almost one-half mile of the river and creek, as well as a mature riparian, cottonwood, and sycamore forest. In 2008, a Conservancy grant enabled the OVLC to purchase the Drapeau Property, 53.5 acres of river bottom and riparian habitat that is now known as OVLC's Rio Vista Preserve. Finally, in 2011 the Conservancy granted \$500,000 for the acquisition of Hollingsworth Ranch, an historic property on 70 acres that is envisioned as the Ventura River Steelhead Preserve Education and Conservation Center. The Conservancy granted a further \$111,000 in 2012 to the OVLC for the development of a feasibility study for the Education and Conservation Center.

Each of these acquisitions are components of the Conservancy's Ventura River Parkway Program, a multi-phased effort to acquire and restore a series of key riparian parcels to create a contiguous corridor of habitat and recreational open space along the lower 15 miles of the river from Ojai to the estuary. Because of the regional importance of the Ventura River corridor, a comprehensive river parkway program will conserve habitat linkages and connectivity, reconnect creek and river corridors to their floodplains, restore riparian and aquatic habitat, remove invasive species, and stabilize streambanks through environmentally-sensitive measures. In support of that effort, the Conservancy has also provided funding to the Trust for Public Land to

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conduct preliminary planning, stakeholder coordination and property analyses for the River Parkway Program along the lower six miles of the river from Foster Park to the estuary.

The project to be implemented with this grant would fund another component of the River Parkway project and complement the Conservancy’s other efforts in the Ventura River watershed. The project would also support other work underway along the River, including the preparation of a Conceptual Area Protection Plan for the watershed by the OVLC and Ventura Hillside Conservancy and the work of the community-based Ventura River Watershed Council, which serves as the vehicle for establishing objectives and prioritizing projects for the County’s Integrated Regional Water Management Planning (IRWMP) program.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

Conservancy funding will initially be used for acquisition and closing costs in conjunction with OVLC funds. After acquisition, Conservancy funding will be used to secure the property and prepare a management plan for the property, also in conjunction with grantee funds.

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	<b>\$843,000.00</b>
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy	\$50,000.00
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$893,000.00</b>

Staff expects to use funds appropriated in FY 2010/11 to the Conservancy from the “California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Fund” (Proposition 40). This funding source may be used for the acquisition of land and water resources in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. (Public Resources Code Section 5096.650(b)). As discussed below, the project is consistent with Chapter 8 of Division 21. Proposition 40 also requires the Conservancy to give priority to grant projects with matching funds. (Public Resources Code Section 5096.651). The OVLC will contribute \$50,000 to the proposed project, in addition to other funds that may be temporarily needed to prepare the residential parcel for sale.

Further Conservancy funding is expected to come from the FY 08/09 appropriation to the Conservancy from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84), re-appropriated in 2011. Proposition 84 authorizes the use of funds for projects that will carry out the Conservancy’s statutory mission (Pub. Res. Code § 75060(b)). Consistency of this project with the Conservancy’s statutory mission is discussed below in “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation”. Proposition 84 provides that the Conservancy give priority to projects that demonstrate one or more of the characteristics specified in Pub. Res. Code Section 75071. The proposed acquisition satisfies four of the five priority criteria:

1. The property links to existing protected areas with other large blocks of protected habitat. The linkage serves to connect existing protected areas, facilitate wildlife movement and botanical transfer, and results in sustainable combined acreage. Specifically, the Hatton property links to the 1600-acre Ventura River Preserve and consolidates access to the ephemeral Cozy Dell Creek, a potential habitat corridor to protected uplands.

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2. The project will contribute to the long-term protection of, and improvement to, the water and biological quality of the Ventura River and its estuary.
3. Acquisition of the Hatton property will add 28 acres to the 1600-acre Ventura River Preserve, thus contributing to the protection of relatively large areas of protected habitat as described in the “Watershed Description” section, above.
4. The acquisition also includes a non-state funds match of \$50,000 from OVLC. A portion of these funds will be used toward acquisition of fee title in the Hatton property.

As required by Section 75701(f), Conservancy staff has submitted to the Resources Agency and posted on the Conservancy's website an explanation as to how the proposed acquisition meets the criteria of Section 75071.

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has a volunteer work crew that will perform significant work on this property preparing it to be added to the Ventura River Preserve. It is difficult to predict and value their contributions until the management plan is complete, but they will contribute at least \$10,000 of in-kind services toward the project.

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

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 8 of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31350-31356), regarding reservation of significant coastal resource areas.

Public Resources Code section 31350 authorizes the Conservancy to ensure the reservation of significant coastal resource sites for public use and enjoyment, that would otherwise be lost to public use. Without the purchase of this property by OVLC through the Conservancy’s assistance, the property will likely be sold to a private developer and a significant conservation opportunity would be lost.

Section 31352 provides that the Conservancy may award a grant to a nonprofit organization for a purpose specified in section 31351 if (as is the case with this project) that organization is unable to acquire a property due to limited financial resources or other circumstances. Without the Conservancy funding proposed here, the OVLC would lack the funding needed to acquire the Hatton property.

Under section 31351, the Conservancy may cooperate with nonprofit organizations (such as the OVLC) to ensure the reservation of interests in real property for purposes of Division 21, as well as objectives of the California Coastal Act and local plans. The proposed acquisition will help protect natural resources and wildlife habitat, consistent with Chapter 6 (coastal resource enhancement) and will provide open space and public access, consistent with Chapter 9 (system of public accessways). Additionally, although the Hatton property is located outside the coastal zone, protection of sensitive wetland, riparian, and oak woodland habitat areas along the Ventura River, which drains to the sea, is consistent with Local Coastal Program policies, as discussed further below. The proposed acquisition will also help further goals in the Ojai Valley Area Plan of the County’s General Plan (2005). Specifically, it will serve to “protect significant biological resources within the Ojai Valley in order to maintain natural ecosystems and also preserve the

natural beauty of the area” [Goal 1.4.1 (1)]; and to “balance the preservation of wetland habitats with the need to adequately protect public safety and property from flooding hazards” [Goal 1.4.1 (2)].

The proposed preparation of a management plan is consistent with Public Resources Code section 31111, which authorizes the Conservancy, in implementing Division 21, to award grants to nonprofit organizations to prepare plans.

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

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective G**, the proposed project will expand the system of inland trails that connect to the coast by acquiring land to augment the existing Ventura River Parkway.

Consistent with **Goal 4, Objective A**, the proposed project will protect a significant coastal watershed resource property.

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective A**, the proposed project will enhance natural resources within the Ventura River Watershed by the development of a management plan for monitoring and adaptive management of the natural resources on the Hatton property.

**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:** The project is supported by Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett, State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, State Assemblyman Das Williams, the Ventura County Watershed Coalition, the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, various local water and sanitation districts, various non-profit conservation organizations, the City of Ventura and the City of Ojai, federal and state agencies, including the Coastal Conservancy, and a number of individuals. Letters of support are provided in Exhibit 5.
4. **Location:** Although the proposed project is located outside the Coastal Zone, it would add acreage to the Ventura River Parkway Program and help support the goal of that program to create a contiguous corridor of habitat and recreational open space along the river from Ojai to the estuary. Conservation of the Hatton property would benefit coastal resources by protecting coastal drainages and providing potential habitat for special status species that are dependent on areas in the Coastal Zone.
5. **Need:** The former owner of this property passed away unexpectedly and the assets of the estate including this property are being liquidated by the estate administrator. The Ojai

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Valley Land Conservancy was able to negotiate the right to purchase the property, but in order to secure the purchase agreement prior to the property being publicly listed for sale, had to move quickly. As a result, there has been limited time to consider alternative funding sources. Without Conservancy funding the acquisition would not be possible.

6. **Greater-than-local interest:** This project will add to and connect with other components of the OVLC's preserve network, as well as with other parts of the Ventura River Parkway. The OVLC's preserves provide critical habitat for special status species in the Ventura River watershed. The Hatton property would be added to the Ventura River Preserve which has dozens of miles of trails and is one of the most used recreational areas in western Ventura County, hosting over 10,000 visitors annually.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** At an elevation of approximately 650 feet above mean sea level and a location fifteen miles inland from the coast, the Hatton property is outside the area considered vulnerable to future sea level rise by the end of this century.

### Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** Unless the OVLC can complete this acquisition, the executor of the Hatton estate will formally place the property on the open market for sale.
9. **Resolution of more than one issue:** Acquisition of the Hatton property will help address issues of natural floodplain management, watershed and coastal resource protection, habitat protection and restoration, endangered species recovery, and public recreation and access.
10. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
12. **Innovation:** The implementation of the Ventura River Parkway program provides a creative and effective approach to the resolution of resource and recreational issues along one of the most important river systems of Southern California.
13. **Readiness:** The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy has secured the right to purchase the property (contingent on upcoming appraisal) on or before the planned closing date of September 24, 2014.
14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.
15. **Return to Conservancy:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
16. **Cooperation:** While this is a project of the OVLC, members of the Ventura River Watershed Council and the general public will be involved in implementation of the future management plan for the property.
17. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** The proposed project involves the acquisition of land as reservation of significant coastal resources. While the project may be impacted by climate change, the conservation of open space is expected to provide flexibility for ecosystems and species in a changing climate.
18. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The proposed project involves a transfer of title for the protection of existing open space and would not directly contribute to the generation of greenhouse gas emissions. The preservation of the Hatton Property as habitat

and open space will likely help sequester carbon in the Ventura River watershed, although in amounts that are difficult to estimate at this time.

**CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the policy goals of the certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) of the City of San Buenaventura (the City of Ventura), as amended in 1990. The City's LCP includes policies which stress protection of the natural attributes and wildlife of the Ventura River (3.1), protection of sensitive wetland, riparian, and oak woodland habitat areas (e.g., policies 12.1, 12.4 and 12.6), and both preservation of the Ventura River in its existing semi-natural state and its restoration to natural conditions (Policy 13.1).

**COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

Funding of the acquisition of the Hatton property is categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Sections 15313 and 15325. Section 15313 exempts acquisition of lands for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and for preserving access to public lands and waters where the purpose of the acquisition is to preserve the land in its natural condition. The acquisition is similarly exempt pursuant to Section 15325 because the project involves a transfer of ownership in order to preserve existing natural conditions and open space.

The funding of the preparation of the management plan is also exempt from review under CEQA because it involves only data gathering, planning, and feasibility analyses for possible future actions that have not yet been authorized or approved by the Conservancy or another agency and is thus statutorily exempt from the CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR Section 15262. Planning carried out as part of the project will, however, consider environmental factors, as required by Section 15262. In addition, data collection and resource evaluation activities conducted for this project are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15306. This categorical exemption applies to activities that consist of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. Preparation of the management plan involves analysis of the property's resources and creation of a program for restoring and managing the site.

Preparation of the property is exempt from CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR Section 15303 which exempts new construction or conversion of small structures. Included in this exemption are appurtenant structures such as fences and signs necessary to secure the property.

The potential lot line adjustment is exempt from CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR Section 15305 which exempts alterations in land use limitations in areas with an average slope of less than 20%, which do not result in any changes in land use or density. Activities falling within this exemption include lot line adjustments.

Upon Conservancy approval of the proposed authorization, staff will file a Notice of Exemption for the project.

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