

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
May 26, 2016

UPPER DEVEREUX SLOUGH RESTORATION PROJECT

Project No. 11-019-03
Project Manager: Rachel Couch

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration and possible Conservancy authorization to disburse up to \$1,672,463 of grant funds from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Regents of the University of California for restoration of wetlands and connected uplands at Upper Devereux Slough, Santa Barbara County, and adoption of findings under the California Environmental Quality Act.

LOCATION: Devereux Slough, unincorporated Santa Barbara County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: Project Location Map
 - Exhibit 2: Figures and Photos
 - Exhibit 3: Project Letters
 - Exhibit 4: Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
 - Exhibit 5: Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement to the Regents of the University of California, Santa Barbara campus (“UCSB”) of up to one million six hundred seventy-two thousand four hundred sixty-three dollars (\$1,672,463) in grant funds awarded to the Conservancy by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under its National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (NCWC Grant”) to undertake restoration of wetlands and connected uplands in Devereux Slough, as shown on Exhibit 1 to the accompanying staff recommendation. This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, UCSB shall submit for review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:

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- a. A work program, budget, schedule, and list of contractors to be retained for the project.
 - b. Evidence that all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained.
 - c. A signing plan for the project acknowledging Conservancy funding.
2. UCSB shall ensure that all public access facilities constructed as part of the project are consistent with the Conservancy's 'Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development' and with all applicable federal and state statutes, regulations and guidelines governing access for persons with disabilities.
 3. In carrying out the project, UCSB shall comply with:
 - a. All applicable mitigation and monitoring measures that are required by any permit or other regulatory approval for the project, and that are identified in the "University of California, Santa Barbara North Campus Open Space Restoration Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration" adopted by UCSB on March 29, 2016 ("IS/MND"), or the associated Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program, Exhibits 4 and 5 to the accompanying staff recommendation.
 - b. All applicable requirements of the NCWC Grant."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

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

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and objectives set forth in Chapter 6 of Division 21 the Public Resources Code (Section 31251-31270) regarding enhancement of coastal resources.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. As a responsible agency, the Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the IS/MND, adopted by UCSB on March 29, 2016, attached as Exhibit 4 to the accompanying staff recommendation. Based on the record as a whole, the Conservancy finds that the proposed project, avoids, reduces, or mitigates the possible effects of the project to a level of insignificance and that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, may have a significant effect on the environment, as defined by the CEQA Guidelines, 14 Cal. Code Regs §15382."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The proposed authorization is to provide a grant of up to \$1,672,463 in grant funds awarded to the Conservancy by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (USFWS grant), to the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), for restoration of upper Devereux Slough. The project will restore up to 136

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acres of tidal and freshwater wetlands and connected uplands in the slough for the purpose of providing and enhancing existing fish and wildlife habitat and open space.

Restoration of the tidal and freshwater wetlands will occur predominantly on the Ocean Meadows Property, acquired by UCSB in 2013 with Conservancy assistance. Restoration of the connected wetlands and uplands will occur on adjacent property, the South Parcel, currently owned by UCSB and dedicated to preservation of natural resources and open space.

Restoration of the project area is needed to reverse the damage that occurred when upper Devereux Slough was filled, reducing a large area of tidal wetland to a narrow creek channel. Historically, upper Devereux Slough contained significant wetland values with both freshwater and tidal wetland habitat types and supported more than half of the coastal wetlands within the slough system. In 1965, wetlands in the upper slough were filled to create the nine-hole Ocean Meadows golf course. Roughly half a million cubic yards of soil was moved from adjacent lands, the area now referred to as "South Parcel," causing severe degradation of the borrow sites and filling the estuary with four to ten feet of sediment. This not only reduced the flood capacity of the wetland, but also significantly reduced wetland habitat for estuarine and palustrine-dependent wildlife, including fish, birds, insects and mammals of concern (Campopiano, M, C. M. Denn, E. Miller, S. D. Pratt, R. Smyk-Newton, and J. Yi. 2000. Enhancement Alternatives for the Ocean Meadows Golf Course Site: Goleta, California. University of California, Santa Barbara.)

Restoration of upper Devereux Slough is the final component needed to complete the permanent preservation of an approximately 650-acre complex of land (see Exhibit 2) for natural resources, open space, aesthetic values, public access, passive recreation and education. The restored property will provide a critical connection between Ellwood Mesa and Coal Oil Point Reserve, which comprises the lower Devereux Slough. Restoration of the property will also provide an unprecedented opportunity to create a wildlife corridor linking the Goleta Slough to the east with Ellwood Mesa and the lower slough. The project will also protect existing estuarine habitats downslope of the property by removing the existing golf course land use that contributes to excess pollutant loads in the estuary, one of three major sources of impairment to the Devereux Slough system.

Restoration of the tidal and freshwater wetlands on the Ocean Meadows Property has been identified as a Tier One priority by the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. The project also furthers the objectives of the Joint Proposal for the Ellwood-Devereux Coast (Joint Proposal) and the related Ellwood-Devereux Coast Open Space and Habitat Management Plan (OSHMP). Both documents were prepared by the County of Santa Barbara, UCSB, and the City of Goleta to guide development and the protection of open space, natural resource values, and public access within the project area. Protection and restoration of the Devereux Slough and its watershed has been identified as a high priority in numerous other conservation plans including the Coal Oil Point Natural Reserve Management Plan and the UCSB Campus Wetlands Management Plan.

The overall project vision is to restore the opportunity for tidal connection to the site, increase the amount and complexity of brackish and freshwater wetland features, and restore upland and wetland habitats. The project's overarching goals are: 1) enhance wetland and associated upland habitats characteristic of the Devereux Slough ecosystem, requiring expansion of estuarine wetlands consistent with the larger historic lagoon estuary that is also likely to provide habitat for threatened and endangered species, and result in resilient ecosystem structure and function;

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and 2) maintain open space and develop opportunities for passive recreation, research and educational use that are compatible with the environmentally sensitive resources of the area.

The proposed project will restore approximately 68 acres of wetland habitat and 45 acres of uplands, install access facilities, perform site maintenance and monitoring, and promote educational opportunities. Specifically, the restoration will involve removal of approximately 350,000 cubic yards of the soil placed in the upper arms of the slough to create the golf course, restoring the area to a mosaic of wetland habitat types, including freshwater, brackish and tidal wetlands. The site will be revegetated with native species to form a diverse array of habitats. Using the soil removed during the wetland excavation, adjacent uplands on South Parcel will be restored, as well. Restored habitat types will include oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, native perennial grassland, vernal pools, and back dune swale. The project will also remove a water control structure, a sheet pile sill and armoring from Devereux Creek at the boundary between lower and upper Devereux Slough. This will restore the hydrologic connection between the restored upper Slough habitats and the existing lower Slough. The project will benefit approximately 27 wildlife and plant species of federal and state concern including the federally endangered tidewater goby, California least tern and Ventura marsh milk-vetch, and the federally threatened western snowy plover and California red-legged frog.

Restoration of the entire project site will restore the historic functions of a riparian-to-estuary transition of significant size, enhancing the quality of the existing wetlands and effectively doubling the wetland habitat in the Devereux Slough system. The project will be resilient to sea level rise because it includes space for migration of the estuary wetlands with sea level rise.

In addition to the habitat restoration, the proposed project includes installation of new access facilities. These consist of three miles of public access trails and boardwalks that will run east-west along the northern boundary of the site between the restored wetland and the residential neighborhood, and a trail running north to south crossing the wetland in two places. The trails will connect to existing trail networks within the open spaces to the south and west, including those leading to the beach, and to residential areas to the north and east. Two bridges and a viewing platform will also be installed along the trails. Additionally, improvements to an existing parking lot and an adjacent gathering area with interpretive signs and benches are elements included as part of the overall project design.

The proposed project will be implemented in three phases: pre-construction collection and propagation of plant materials; construction of the project; and maintenance and monitoring of the restoration site. The construction phase of the project will involve mobilization and site preparation, bulk earthwork and fine grading to reshape the property, installation of grade control scour protection, improvements to stormwater drainage, and installation of public access features, and revegetation.

Pre-construction and construction are scheduled to begin in 2016 in order to utilize available grant funds previously secured by UCSB. The first construction phase will be limited to a few months prior to the onset of the rainy season. This first phase will focus on the north and east perimeter of the site. The remainder of the project will be constructed in the dry season of 2017, and, if necessary a third season in 2018. Vegetation maintenance is anticipated to last five years after planting. Regular monitoring will be conducted following the completion of construction to document the evolution of ecological and geomorphic conditions at the project site. Monitoring

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results will inform the adaptive management of the project site, which may include actions such as additional planting or alterations to the original planting and irrigation plan, control of invasive plant species, installation or removal of temporary erosion control measures, maintenance of public access infrastructure, and public outreach efforts.

The proposed project will be led by UCSB's Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER), in cooperation with the Office of Budget and Planning and the Design and Construction Division of Facilities Management (FM). Restoration will be overseen by FM, which will work with contractors. CCBER will utilize students who are participating in its restoration intern program for monitoring and surveying activities. The intern training program provides hands-on experience for students interested in restoration ecology, research and management. CCBER currently manages over 151 acres on campus including several 6-10 acre mitigation projects as well as bioswale and stormwater management systems.

Site Description: Upper Devereux Slough is located approximately one-half mile from the ocean in the coastal zone adjacent to the City of Goleta in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. Historically, the upper slough supported wetland habitat and was a functioning part of the Devereux Slough ecosystem. In 1965, approximately 55 acres of wetland were lost when filled to create the Ocean Meadows Golf Course. Remaining wetland habitat (4.8 acres) is found along Devereux Creek which flows through the Ocean Meadows property for approximately a third of a mile, then empties into the lower slough and from there into the Pacific Ocean. The Devereux Creek watershed rises from sea level to 580 feet elevation and encompasses approximately 2,400-acres.

Devereux Slough as a whole contains a complex of estuarine, palustrine and upland habitat for numerous listed species. It is one of the remaining estuaries in Santa Barbara County to have functioning habitat for the threatened western snowy plover, and supports critical habitat necessary for the recovery of the species. Devereux Slough is one of only three sites where the federally-endangered Ventura marsh milk-vetch is recovering after being presumed extinct for 30 years.

The project site currently has approximately 55.6 acres of turf and 65 acres of upland habitat. There are 4.8 acres of freshwater marsh along Devereux creek and an additional 4.5 acres of wetlands on South Parcel. In addition, two acres of annual grassland and remnant salt marsh vegetation lie around the periphery of the managed golf course, and there is approximately one-half acre of restored coastal sage scrub adjacent to the creek. The project site is used for foraging by a range of raptor species, including white-tailed kite, coopers, red-tailed and red shouldered hawks, plus northern harrier and loggerhead shrikes. Numerous small mammals such as mice, rabbits, voles, and squirrels are found on the site. Southwestern pond turtle have been observed in the creek and may have been relocated to that location in the past. California red-legged frogs have been documented in the Devereux watershed, and in other locations within dispersal distance of the property, with protected open space in between.

Devereux Slough is part of a large open space complex know as the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space, an approximately 650-acre complex of properties permanently protected for natural resources, open space, aesthetic values, public access, passive recreation and education. To the south and west, the project site abuts already protected open space including the 230-acre Sperling Preserve at Ellwood Mesa, owned by the City of Goleta, and the 170-acre Coal Oil Point Reserve, part of the University of California Natural Reserve System. North and east of the

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project site are existing housing developments (private and owned by UCSB), plus two parcels that have been developed by UCSB for housing.

Project History: Interest in restoring upper Devereux Slough has a long and complex history and has been a long-term objective of the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project. The Santa Barbara Chapter of the Audubon Society first approached the Coastal Conservancy about acquiring the property in order to restore it to its historical wetland habitat in 1989. However, no project resulted. In 2000, UCSB Bren School students completed a study of restoration alternatives for the upper Devereux Slough, specifically restoration of the Ocean Meadows golf course property. In 2001, the Conservancy contributed funds toward the development of the Joint Proposal for the Elwood Devereux Coast (Joint Proposal), which recognized the historical significance of the site and its potential for restoration. In 2008, TPL representatives first contacted the Ocean Meadows Property owner to inquire about acquiring the property for conservation purposes. TPL informed the Conservancy about the project in 2009, and subsequently secured a purchase agreement to acquire the property. In May 2011, the Conservancy approved a \$3 million grant, including \$500,000 of USFWS funds, to TPL for acquisition of the Ocean Meadows Property. TPL completed acquisition of the property in March of 2013. TPL conveyed the property to UCSB in April 2013 to own, restore and subsequently manage the land for conservation purposes in perpetuity.

In 1994, UCSB acquired the property that surrounds the Ocean Meadows Golf course with the intention of building faculty, staff and student housing. Community opposition to this proposal and one to develop the bluffs at Ellwood Mesa led to the collaborative planning effort that resulted in moving development rights off the bluff area and protecting 652 acres of coastal open space area through the Ellwood-Devereux Open Space Management Plan (2004). As a condition of development approved for land to the north and east of Ocean Meadows property (North Parcel), UCSB placed a permanent conservation easement on South Parcel in 2010. Other conditions include specific mitigation requirements for impacts to wetlands and grasslands on North Parcel that will result in approximately 12 acres of restoration on South Parcel.

Conservancy staff has worked collaboratively with UCSB and TPL since 2009 to raise funds to restore the wetland and upland areas comprising the upper Slough to functioning habitat. Implementation of the project is the next step in the restoration process.

PROJECT FINANCING

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| Coastal Conservancy (USFWS grant) | \$1,672,463 |
| CNRA – Urban Greening | \$960,000 |
| CDFW – GHG Sequestration | \$900,000 |
| CDFW – Proposition 1 | \$1,000,000 |
| DWR – Urban Streams | \$930,000 |
| County Flood Control | \$100,000 |
| CalTrans Active Transportation Program | \$2,449,000 |
| UCSB | \$500,000 |

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| Others (decisions pending) | \$5,488,537 |
| Project Total | \$14,000,000 |

The expected sources of funds for this project are funds awarded to the Conservancy by USFWS from its National Coastal Wetland Conservation grant program. The USFWS grant award was specifically for the upper Devereux Slough restoration project.

In total, the Conservancy has been awarded \$3 million from the USFWS National Coastal Wetland Conservation grant program for acquisition and restoration of upper Devereux Slough. To date, \$500,000 was put towards acquisition of the property, and \$769,300 has been approved for pre-implementation activities including project design, permitting, interim management, and environmental review. The remainder of the grant funds (\$1,672,463), which are the subject of this proposed authorization, will be used for restoration implementation.

UCSB has secured or is in the process of securing additional outside funding needed to complete the restoration from a variety of other State and local funding sources. UCSB will also provide its own funds in the amount of \$500,000.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Pursuant to Section 31251, the Conservancy may award grants to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of enhancement of coastal resources that, because of natural or human-induced events have suffered loss of natural and scenic values. Grants under this chapter are to be utilized for, among other purposes, corrective measures that will enhance the natural and scenic character of the areas. The proposed project will restore up to 136 acres of coastal wetland and associated upland habitat that have been severely degraded and altered by development of the Ocean Meadows golf course and removal of fill from the associated upland habitat.

Consistent with Section 31252, Devereux Slough has been identified in the Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Program as requiring public action to resolve existing resource protection problems. See "Consistency with Local Coastal Program Policies" section, below.

Section 31253 states that the Conservancy may provide up to the total cost of a coastal resource enhancement project. Consistent with Section 31253, the following factors were considered in determining the amount of Conservancy funding for this project: the total amount of funding available for coastal resource enhancement projects, the fiscal resources of the applicant, the urgency of the project, and the Conservancy's project selection criteria, as described in detail below, under the heading "Consistency With Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines." The USFWS funds granted to the Conservancy for the Devereux Slough restoration phase constitute approximately 13 percent of project implementation costs.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), AS REVISED JUNE 25, 2015:

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective B** of the Conservancy's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will provide public access to the newly restored coastal wetland and upland areas.

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Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective B**, the proposed project will restore and enhance 136 acres of habitats in Devereux Slough.

Consistent with **Goal 7, Objective D**, the project is a climate change adaptation project that will increase wetland accommodation and migration space to reduce hazards from sea level rise and extreme storm events, and protect natural resources and maximize public benefits.

**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 October 2, 2014, 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. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** By restoring the historic tidal wetland habitats of the subject property the project serves to promote and implement several state plans including:
 - *California Water Action Plan* (2014). The California Natural Resources Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, and California Department of Food and Agriculture developed this Water Action Plan to meet three broad objectives: more reliable water supplies, the restoration of species and habitat, and a more resilient, sustainably manager water resources system. The proposed project promotes Goal #4, "Protect and Restore Important Ecosystems", which identifies restoration of coastal watersheds as a priority action.
 - *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2013 Draft). Key Action #3 of the "Preserve and Steward State Lands and Natural Resources" calls for building resilience in natural systems and specifically calls out the need for well-maintained watersheds and floodplains.
 - *CA Climate Adaptation Strategy/Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk Plan* (CA Natural Resources Agency, July 2014). The plan identifies "Actions Needed to Safeguard Biodiversity and Habitats" including #1: Improve habitat connectivity and protect climate refugia. The restoration will add to the effort to restore the wetland ecosystem of the Devereux Slough, which drains to the Pacific Ocean.
 - This proposed project also aligns with the goals listed in the *CA Climate Adaptation Strategy/Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk Plan* (CA Natural Resources Agency, July 2014) in terms of improving management practices for coastal and ocean ecosystems and resources by including climate adaption strategies.

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4. **Support of the public:** The proposed project has the support of U.S. Congresswoman Lois Capps, State Senator Hannah Beth Jackson, Assemblymember Das Williams, County of Santa Barbara Supervisor Doreen Farr, Santa Barbara Chapter of the Audubon Society, the Environmental Defense Center, Friends of the Ellwood Coast, and the Gaviota Coast Conservancy. See Project Letters, Exhibit 3.
5. **Location:** The proposed project is located within the coastal zone of Santa Barbara County.
6. **Need:** While UCSB has obtained in-kind commitments and matching funds from public agencies and partnering organizations, Conservancy assistance is needed at this time to enable the proposed project to move forward into the implementation phase. Construction is slated to begin in the fall of 2016.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** California has lost a high percentage of its coastal wetlands. Restoration of the upper Devereux Slough will restore a coastal estuary to its historic ecological function. For this reason, the proposed project has been identified as a top priority of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, a consortium of State and federal agencies working together to conserve coastal wetlands across five counties. Restoration of the site will also benefit several federal and state listed threatened and endangered species.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** Coastal estuaries are by nature, frequently subject to flooding, erosion and storm surges, though such events could become more frequent or severe as a result of sea level rise and changes in storm patterns. The project will minimize climate change impacts by restoring land that could otherwise have been developed for residential purposes. The project will provide additional area for lower tidal wetland habitats to migrate to as sea level rises. As a coastal wetland ecosystem, parts of the project are located in areas vulnerable to sea level rise. During project planning, modeling was conducted incorporating a range of sea level rise scenarios, which informed a vulnerability assessment of the project area. Tidal wetland habitat will be restored to a previously filled area, and was specifically designed to accommodate the impacts associated with sea level rise, including inundation, storm surge, erosion, and migration of habitats and species inland and upland as sea levels rise. The project infrastructure (trails and bridges) were designed at an elevation to accommodate up to three feet of sea level rise. Beyond three feet, the system becomes more tidally influenced, which effectively resets the system, lowering water levels, due to the sand berm dynamics at the lagoon mouth. Restoration of the site would increase water capacity by over 90 acre-feet from the current lower Devereux Slough capacity of 171 acre-feet, thus further buffering the impacts of climate change.

Additional Criteria

9. **Urgency:** UCSB has secured a significant amount of grant funding to undertake the restoration. However, these funds must be spent within certain time limits. With the addition of Conservancy funding, there is currently an opportunity to fully restore this ecosystem, which may not reoccur if the other grant funding is lost.
10. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Innovation:** The project involves a plan to use a significant portion of the fill removed from the golf course in the restoration of the adjacent South Parcel, thereby reducing traffic and

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noise impacts, greenhouse gas emissions, beneficially reusing soil, and reducing project costs.

12. **Readiness:** UCSB is ready to commence the proposed project in the fall of 2016.
13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** In 2001, the Conservancy contributed funds toward the development of the Joint Proposal for the Ellwood-Devereux Coast (Joint Proposal). This plan called for preservation of the 650 acre open space complex as natural open space and habitat. In June 2004, the Conservancy contributed \$4,000,000 toward the purchase of the 137-acre Ellwood Mesa property (Sperling Preserve), now owned by the City of Goleta and located immediately west of, but not bordering the Ocean Meadows property. Acquisition and restoration of Upper Devereux Slough is the final component of realizing the vision of the Joint Proposal. See also “Project History” above.
14. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** The property’s restoration will protect areas adjacent to shoreline habitats, which will support native species in need of shifting habitats that may result from climate change, and will specifically conserve and restore habitats that sequester carbon by protecting and eventually restoring tidal wetlands. Finally, restoration of the property will enhance and restore the property’s estuarine and palustrine zones to accommodate increased flooding, erosion and storm surges.
15. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The project will reduce the future production of greenhouse gas emissions by preventing development of the property. While the project will create some temporary greenhouse gas emissions during the construction period, the restoration of wetland habitat on the property will likely result in greenhouse gas emission reductions.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The “Coastal Land Use Plan” adopted by the County of Santa Barbara in 1982 is the certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) for the County of Santa Barbara, including the project area. Section 3.9.1 of the County’s LCP calls for preservation, protection and restoration of environmentally sensitive habitats. LCP Section 3.9.4 specifically identifies as environmentally sensitive habitat areas three habitat types occurring in the Devereux Slough: wetlands, streams, and seabird nesting and roosting areas.

The Goleta Community Plan (GCP), adopted in 1993 as part of the County’s LCP, contains the land use and zoning designations which govern the project site. According to the GCP, the Devereux Slough and surrounding open lands are a “regional ecosystem” worthy of protection. The Devereux Slough is supported by a “diverse assemblage of relatively intact habitats located within blocks of open space which provide sufficient space, forage and cover to support diverse wildlife populations. The continued functioning of these regional systems is dependent upon the preservation of a sufficient amount and diversity of habitat to sustain such populations.”

GCP Policy Bio-GV-1 states, “The County shall designate and provide protection to important or sensitive environmental resources or habitats in the Goleta Planning Area” and GCP Policy Bio-GV-2 states, “Environmentally sensitive habitat and riparian corridors within the Goleta Planning Area shall be protected and where feasible and appropriate, enhanced.” Finally, GCP Policy Bio-GV-11 states, “Wetland areas and surrounding habitats that have been damaged by

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pollution and artificial stream channelization shall be restored to their natural condition to the maximum extent feasible.

The proposed project is consistent with the policies of the LCP and GCP because it would restore the historic wetland.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), UCSB, the land owner and lead agency for the proposed project, prepared the “North Campus Open Space Restoration Project Initial Study and MND” (“IS/MND”) (Exhibit 4). The IS/MND tiers from the UCSB 2010 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) Final Environmental Impact Report. The LRDP is a land use plan which identifies future proposed development of the UCSB campus and addresses consistency of the development with the Coastal Act. The LRDP covers the proposed project and project site, identifying its anticipated development as “Open Space”.

A draft of the IS/MND was made available for public review and comment for a 30-day period from February 26, 2016 to March 28, 2016. UCSB received a public comment letter on the draft IS/MND from the City of Goleta and made minor revisions to the draft IS/MND in response to those comments. The revisions made minor clarifications to proposed mitigation measures related to traffic safety (painting existing curbs red for traffic sight safety) and setback distances for noise-producing equipment to minimize short-term noise impacts. These minor clarifications did not require recirculation of the IS/MND. An additional comment letter was received from a resident near the project site that requested additional information regarding the project, which was provided. Comments received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) addressed a variety of issues but primarily pertained to short-term construction-related impacts to common and sensitive species on the project site. The additional information requested by CDFW has been provided or will be included in a project-specific Habitat Restoration and Monitoring Plan, which was described by the IS/MND. Additional comments on the IS/MND were provided by the Santa Barbara Audubon Society. Many of the Audubon Society comments did not address the adequacy of the environmental review included in the IS/MND but suggested possible revisions to the design of the project. None of the comments received from CDFW or the Audubon Society resulted in the identification of new significant environmental impacts or required the adoption of additional mitigation measures. On March 29, 2016, UCSB adopted the IS/MND (Exhibit 4), approved the project, and adopted a Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (“MMRP”) (Exhibit 5).

The IS/MND identifies potential effects of the proposed project in the areas of: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Hazards & Hazardous Materials, Land Use Planning, Noise, Transportation/Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. The IS/MND identifies mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate all of the possible significant environmental effects to less than significant. The project’s potentially significant effects and mitigation measures are summarized below and are set forth in the attached IS/MND and Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program.

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Aesthetics

The proposed project could result in impacts to scenic trees adjacent to residential neighborhood. Measures to protect trees will be implemented during grading in the vicinity of the trees. Trees that will be removed will be replaced and a tree replacement planting plan will be prepared.

Air Quality

Temporary, localized emissions of particulate matter during construction have the potential to exceed ambient air quality standards and contribute to regional violations of the ambient air quality standards. The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District has a list of construction dust control measures (sweeping, watering, etc.) that will be implemented for all construction phases to reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

Biological Resources

The proposed project could result in direct and indirect impacts to federal and/or state listed plant and animal species, and could conflict with policies regarding some of these species. Mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to special status species to less than significant include a tar plant restoration plan, seasonal avoidance, nesting bird surveys, salvage and relocation plan for tidewater goby and red-legged frog, and compliance with applicable regulatory compliance and permit conditions.

The proposed project also has the potential to impact riparian, wetland, and other natural communities during construction. Grading operations will include dewatering, excavation, and fill of drainage corridors on the project site. Therefore, the short-term temporary construction-related impacts from excavation, fill, and conversion of habitat types would be a potentially significant but mitigable impact. This impact will be reduced to a less than significant level by implementing mitigation measures to comply with federal and state regulations and permit requirements and develop a salvage and relocation plan. These mitigation measures will minimize the potential for construction-related impacts to sensitive wildlife species on the project site, and affirm through the required regulatory compliance process the Project's overall beneficial effect related to increased wetland, aquatic, and tidal habitat functions representative of native habitats present before the golf course and grading eliminated most of these habitat functions.

Hazards & Hazardous Materials

To address the potential project impact of exposing people or structures to wildfire hazard, avoidance of vegetation clearing on the project site during red flag warning periods for the region shall be implemented and a 100-foot wide defensible space shall be established and maintained around the northern and eastern perimeters of the project site.

Land Use Planning

Proposed development projects undertaken at UCSB must be consistent with the requirements of UCSB's 2010 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). The LRDP is a land use plan which identifies future proposed development of the UCSB campus and addresses consistency of the development with the Coastal Act. The LRDP includes policies and development standards, in the form of avoidance, reduction and mitigation measures, to ensure such consistency. The LRDP, which was approved by the California Coastal Commission in November 2014, identifies the project site as "Open Space" and includes policies that are specifically applicable to the

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restoration of the project site. The project's consistency with all applicable LRDP policies is detailed in Table 5.10-1 of the IS/MND. The LRDP policies extend to protection of scenic, native and roosting trees, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, special status plant and wildlife species, archeological resources, public access, water quality, and biological resources. With the implementation of mitigation measures identified by the IS/MND, the project will be consistent with all applicable LRDP policies.

A portion of the project site, including Devereux Creek, is within the California Coastal Commission original jurisdiction and thus is not subject to the LRDP policies, but will be permitted in accordance with the Coastal Act and under a separate Coastal Development Permit (CDP). Although not subject to the LRDP requirements, the project activities in this portion of the project site will be undertaken consistent with the policies required by the LRDP and mitigation measures identified in Table 5.10-1 of the IS/MND. These measures, in addition to any additional conditions imposed under the CDP ensure consistency with the Coastal Act.

The South Parcel is covered under a permanent conservation easement managed by the Santa Barbara County Land Trust. Since the proposed project will retain the entire project area, including the South Parcel, in open space use, it is consistent with this land use requirement.

Noise

The proposed project could result in noise impacts during the construction period. Construction noise reduction measures will be implemented when earthmoving construction equipment is operating on the project site such as use of noise-reducing equipment when possible, location of stationary sources of noise away from sensitive receptors to the extent possible, and timing of loud construction activities to avoid sensitive periods including evenings, weekends, and finals week.

Transportation/Traffic

The proposed project could result in reduction of sight lines along the driveway entrance to the property on Whittier Road. UCSB will request that the City of Goleta provide approximately 25-foot of red curb on both sides of the project site entrance driveway to provide adequate sight distance along Whittier Drive for vehicles exiting the site. If feasible, curb painting will be installed prior to the public's use of the reconfigured parking lot.

Utilities and Service Systems

Proposed grading and construction operations in the vicinity of the GWSD sewer trunk line easement have the potential to conflict with the operation and maintenance of the sewer line on the northern portion of the project site. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Proposed final grading and construction plans for areas near the GWSD pipeline easement shall be provided to the GWSD for review and approval prior to the start of grading activities on the project site.

All mitigation measures proposed by the MND are contained in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project (Exhibit 5).

Based on the IS/MND, UCSB determined that the effects of the project will be avoided, reduced or mitigated to less than significant levels with imposition of the identified mitigation measures. Conservancy staff concurs with this conclusion and, accordingly, recommends that the

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Conservancy: (1) find that the project, as mitigated, avoids, reduces, or mitigates the possible effects of the project to a level of insignificance; and (2) find that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, may have a significant effect on the environment.

If the Conservancy approves the proposed authorization, staff will file a Notice of Determination.