

# COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
May 16, 2019

## **PIE RANCH ACCESSIBLE VISITOR FACILITIES**

Project No. 19-005-01  
Project Manager: Hilary Walecka

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$45,300 to Pie Ranch for the preparation of plans, permit applications, and environmental documentation for improvements to their visitor-serving barn, including two public restrooms, and an entrance ramp and re-oriented parking to increase accessibility for people with physical disabilities, in southern San Mateo County.

**LOCATION:** Southern San Mateo County

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

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### **EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Site Photos](#)

Exhibit 3: [Site Plan](#)

Exhibit 4: [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 disbursement of an amount not to exceed forty-five thousand three hundred dollars (\$45,300) to Pie Ranch to prepare plans, permit applications, and environmental documents for improvements to their visitor-serving barn, including two public restrooms, and an entrance ramp and re-oriented parking to increase accessibility for people with physical disabilities, in southern San Mateo County.

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit the following for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:

- a. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
  - b. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the project.
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- c. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.

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, regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. Pie Ranch is a nonprofit organization which exists under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

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**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends disbursement of up to \$45,300 to Pie Ranch for planning of proposed improvements to their visitor-serving barn, including public restrooms and features to improve accessibility for people with physical disabilities. Pie Ranch is a non-profit organic production and educational farm located near Pescadero on the southern San Mateo County coast (Exhibit 1). Pie Ranch introduces visitors to coastal agriculture and food justice through school programming for underserved youth, and through their roadside Farm Stand located on Highway 1. The Farm Stand draws nearly 50,000 visitors annually.

Pie Ranch’s “Farm Stand” is the gateway to the ranch’s 27-acre property. Located within a 1930s-era barn, the Farm Stand is where visitors interact with Pie Ranch through produce sales, educational programs, classes, and community events. The only restrooms available for visitors at the Farm Stand are outdoor portable toilets (“porta-potties”) that do not effectively meet the needs of large groups or disabled visitors, and are not attractive or pleasant to use. Modern and sanitary restrooms are urgently needed to accommodate Pie Ranch’s large volume of visitors and school programs. In addition, the Farm Stand currently can only be accessed by a series of stairs, making access to the barn difficult or impossible for those with physical disabilities.

Conservancy funds will enable Pie Ranch to conduct the planning for adding: (1) two fully-accessible and flush restrooms to the Farm Stand barn, which will be open to the general public, and (2) an entrance ramp to the barn, and re-orienting disabled parking, to improve access for those with physical disabilities. Planning activities will include preparing designs, permit applications, and conducting environmental review. Through this project, Pie Ranch will be able to address the overwhelming need for public restrooms, improve accessibility features, and create an accessible, welcoming, public portal for the coastal property.

**Site Description:** Pie Ranch’s Farm Stand barn sits along Highway 1 at the entrance to its 27-acre organic farm property in coastal San Mateo County. Pie Ranch’s property includes an organic farm with over 30 different crops, farm animals, the Farm Stand, residential buildings, a native plant garden tended by the Amah Mutsun tribal stewards, and other support buildings. Pie Ranch is located on the historic Steele family’s Green Oaks Ranch which operated as a dairy farm in the 1860’s. The area that includes Pie Ranch was home to the Quiroste Tribe for

thousands of years before European contact, now represented by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band with whom Pie Ranch is in partnership.

**Grantee Qualifications:** For the past 15 years, Pie Ranch has served tens of thousands of visitors annually. Pie Ranch operates its programs through grants, individual donations, private donors, events, and items sold at its Farm Stand. Pie Ranch has been the recipient of the Conservancy’s Explore the Coast grants to bring underserved youth to their school programming. In addition, Pie Ranch has received grants from the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant and the California Department of Food and Agriculture healthy soils incentive program. Pie Ranch has its Organic Certification, Justice Certification, and Animal Welfare Approved status and is committed to cultivating a healthy and just food system from seed to table.

**Project History:** The Farm Stand at Pie Ranch was built in 1934 by the Isaac Steele family as a part of their dairy operation in coastal California. With few renovations since that time, the aging infrastructure and the confines of the Farm Stand facilities impede Pie Ranch’s growth. The proposed project is part of a larger series of capital improvements in Pie Ranch’s PROPAGATE! Capital Campaign to address infrastructural and capital needs at the farm and boost the impact of Pie Ranch’s mission to cultivate a healthy and just food system.

## PROJECT FINANCING

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	\$45,300
<b>Project Total</b>	\$45,300

The anticipated source of Conservancy funding for this is from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (“Proposition 84”), codified at Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 75001-75130. Proposition 84 authorizes the use of these funds for the purpose of promoting access to and enjoyment of coastal resources of the state (PRC Section 75060). Consistent with PRC Section 75060, this proposed project will promote access to and enjoyment of the state’s coastal agricultural and open space resources, by allowing visitors of all physical abilities to enjoy Pie Ranch’s coastal roadside Farm Stand.

Section 75060(c) allocates funding specifically for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165), and states that “not less than 20% of the funds allocated by this paragraph shall be expended on projects in watersheds draining directly to the Pacific Ocean.” The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21, as further discussed below in “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation.” Pie Ranch is also located in an ocean-draining watershed of one of the nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program, so the project meets the requirements of Section 75060(c) of Proposition 84.

In addition to Proposition 84 funding for the project, the award-winning, Berkeley-based architecture and design firm, Arkin Tilt Architects, has provided pro-bono designs in the conceptual phase of this project through the development of initial layout drawings and watercolor renderings. This initial volunteer time is estimated at \$5,000.

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

The proposed project will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165, to address the natural resource and recreational goals of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Section 31162 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area to achieve specified goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.

Consistent with Section 31162(c), the proposed project will assist in implementing the policies of the California Coastal Act (Division 20 of the Public Resources Code) and local jurisdictions, including the adopted Local Coastal Plan of San Mateo County (LCP). The project is consistent with LCP Chapter 11, Recreation/Visitor Serving Facilities Component Section, Policy 11.24a(2) which establish priorities for the expenditure of public funds on public recreation and visitor-serving facilities based on the level of existing development and need, and includes the priority to "Develop and maintain necessary visitor-serving facilities such as rest areas, public restrooms, drinking water, campgrounds". This project would fulfill a significant need to develop permanent sanitary public restrooms at Pie Ranch's coastal roadside Farm Stand, and increase accessibility of the Farm Stand for visitors of all physical abilities so that all visitors may enjoy the state's coastal agricultural and open space resources.

Consistent with Section 31163(d), the proposed project will enhance open space areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes. Pie Ranch's Farm Stand contains an organic farm, native vegetation, and school educational programming that serves tens of thousands of visitors annually, primarily from the urban populations in the Bay Area, but also with visitors from around the world. The project will improve Pie Ranch's accessibility to these populations.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#)  
GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 2 Objective C** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will design facilities to enhance coastal recreational opportunities and enable people to enjoy coastal resources.

Consistent with **Goal 13, Objective A** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will develop plans to improve public access at a coastal agricultural educational facility.

Consistent with **Goal 13, Objective L** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will expand opportunities for access for people with disabilities.

**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:** The project promotes the *California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report (2015)*’s 3<sup>rd</sup> long-term goal, to “Steward and protect natural and working landscapes”, by teaching the general public and next generation of coastal stewards the important benefits agricultural land provides, such as food security, economic support, and, carbon sequestration.
4. **Support of the public:** The Farm Stand renovation project partners include the County of San Mateo, Puente (a Community Resource Center serving the diverse and rural San Mateo South Coast Community), the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, and Peninsula Open Space Trust. The project need and concept were developed from interfacing with, and understanding the needs of, the general public and school groups who use the ranch’s facilities.
5. **Location:** The proposed project would be located within the coastal zone of San Mateo County.
6. **Need:** Without Conservancy funding, the timeframe for building restrooms and accessibility features at Pie Ranch’s Farm Stand would be substantially setback. Constructing restrooms for public use along Highway 1 is Pie Ranch’s top priority in their large-scale capital improvement campaign. The proposed project to complete project designs, permits, and environmental review is essential to moving forward to the construction phase.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** Visitors from throughout the Bay Area and beyond come to Pie Ranch to learn about and support coastal sustainable agriculture. Through its school programming, Pie Ranch connects underserved youth from the urban Bay Area to their food, sustainable farming, and to open spaces on the coast. The planned improvements to the Farm Stand will enhance the visitor experience and improve accessibility and inclusiveness for those with physical disabilities.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The Pie Ranch Farm Stand is located on a coastal terrace 150 feet above sea level approximately one mile from the coastline and thus is not expected to be vulnerable to sea level rise.

### Additional Criteria

9. **Readiness:** The grantee is ready to start the project pending award of Conservancy funding and intends to complete this planning phase of the project by the end of 2019.
10. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** The project will take greenhouse gas emissions into consideration through ecological design and the renovation of the Farm Stand will be designed to reduce and minimize the greenhouse gas emissions associated with operating the facility.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Title 14 CCR Section 15262, as it involves only planning for future actions which have not yet been approved or funded. With this authorization, the Conservancy is only approving the preparation of plans for potential improvements for visitor facility improvements at Pie Ranch, which will not be approved without undergoing environmental review in compliance with CEQA.

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