

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
April 6, 2023

**BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL: PATWINO WORRTLA KODOI DIHI OPEN SPACE PARK CONSTRUCTION**

Project No. 19-036-01  
Project Manager: Virgilio Cuasay

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$400,000 to the Solano Land Trust to augment the Conservancy’s previously authorized grant for construction of a staging area and other public amenities at Patwino Worrntla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park (formerly Rockville Trails Preserve).

**LOCATION:** Fairfield, Solano County

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

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EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Coastal Conservancy Staff Recommendation of February 6, 2020](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes augmentation of a grant to the Solano Land Trust (“the grantee”), previously authorized by the Conservancy on February 6, 2020, by an amount not to exceed four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) to construct a staging area and other public amenities at Patwino Worrntla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park (formerly Rockville Trails Preserve), subject to the same conditions as the set forth in the Conservancy’s authorization of February 6, 2020.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization remains 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.

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to an additional \$400,000 to the Solano Land Trust (SLT) to construct public access improvements at the Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park (formerly known as Rockville Trails Preserve). Note that in 2018, a new name meaning Patwin's Southern Rock Home was chosen and given by the Council of Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, the descendants of the Patwin people who were the first stewards of these lands.

On February 6, 2020, the Conservancy authorized disbursement of \$200,000 to SLT to construct a new visitor staging area consisting of a new public entrance, improved access road, new parking areas, an accessible picnic area and path; and trailhead amenities such as picnic tables, signage, water fountains, children's play area, and restrooms. At that time, the Conservancy adopted findings that it had independently reviewed the project's Mitigated Negative Declaration, and that the project, with the mitigation measures incorporated into the project, avoids, reduces or mitigates potential significant environmental effects and that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment. See Exhibit 1.

SLT completed construction of the staging area in November 2022, and has procured all of the trailhead amenities except the signage pavilion and shade structures; signage planning and oak mitigation are also well under way. SLT now requests additional Conservancy funds for fencing and gates needed to protect staging area improvements from livestock and large wildlife, while enabling park visitors to easily access the 12-mile trail system. Although the fencing and gates were always included and budgeted for as a necessary part of overall park preparations, costs have escalated dramatically in the last three years due to challenging site conditions (e.g., an exceptionally rocky landscape that requires use of an air drill to install post holes); supply chain issues; and rapidly rising gas, material, and labor costs. This request is part of SLT's current effort to raise the additional funds needed to meet these cost escalations from a number of public and private sources.

Findings of consistency with the Conservancy's current project selection criteria and Funding Source are below. All other sections of the Conservancy's February 6, 2020 staff recommendation (contained in Exhibit 1) remain applicable to the project.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:**

The project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

## **Selection Criteria**

### **1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.**

See the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Strategic Plan” section below.

### **2. Project is a good investment of state resources.**

The project will enable SLT to open its 1,500-acre Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi property as a public park (the Park) for outdoor recreation and learning. The proposed fencing and gates will protect the major public and private investment in the new visitor staging area; confine visitor vehicles to the designated access road and parking areas; and enhance public safety by keeping livestock out of high public-use areas (staging area and adjoining County road).

The Park focus is on accessibility for all, including people of various physical abilities, cultural backgrounds, and levels of comfort with the outdoors. In addition to providing outdoor recreation and learning opportunities, the Park will provide habitat for diverse native species and livestock production. Signage will also tell the important story of the Patwin people and their abiding relationship with the land. Overall management of the property will be geared toward sustaining native biodiversity and healthy soils, including grazing management, road and trail maintenance, educational signage, management of public use impacts, and habitat enhancement projects.

The project advances statewide, regional, and Solano County goals and plans for expanding recreational and educational access to the outdoors, and thereby supporting residents’ physical and mental health. The project explicitly helps carry out the following elements of the Governor’s 30X30 Executive Order N-82-20: (1) Conserve at least 30 percent of California’s land and coastal waters by 2030 in a manner that expands equitable outdoor access and recreation for all Californians; and (2) Per the guiding principles in the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, promote healthy lands that provide multiple benefits.

State investment leverages approximately \$5 million in other non-state funding and contributions.

### **3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area.**

SLT has worked closely with the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation to:

- Establish a new name for SLT’s Rockville Trails property and for the new park (Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi or “Patwin’s Southern Rock Home”) that honors their ancestors’ ties to the land.
- Ensure protection of cultural resources during construction activities through on-site monitoring by tribal representatives.
- Develop signage about the Patwin people and their relationship with the land. Four signs have been approved by the tribe and will be featured at the sign pavilion in the

accessible “welcome plaza” portion of the parking/trailhead area. These include Patwin Southern Rock Home, Fields of Abundance (Patwin uses of native plants), The Patwin Language (Patwin names for things visitors may see at the park), and a Land Acknowledgement Statement.

- Properly document and repatriate cultural artifacts.

The granting arm of the tribe, Doyuti T’uhkama, awarded SLT \$1.25 million toward development of the new open space park, including staging area construction, signage, trails, trail benches, outreach materials, and project management. SLT has kept the tribe abreast of progress through periodic grant reports, presentations, and tours.

Representatives from the Wilton Rancheria based in Elk Grove, California participated in the Conservancy’s site visit during evaluation of SLT’s original SCC grant proposal.

**4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.**

SLT retained reputable civil and geotechnical engineers to design the staging area, and a highly-experienced general contractor for the construction phase. They continually adapted the design to actual conditions encountered during construction (e.g., to ensure proper drainage and soil stability), and County inspectors gave the project high marks for quality, and signed off on the grading permit in November 2022. The recent wave of “atmospheric river” storms did nevertheless cause some damage, and the contractor quickly put short-term erosion control and storm-water diversion measures in place. Because “exceptional” storms will likely become more routine due to climate change, SLT and the contractor will evaluate whether additional measures are needed to prevent further problems, and SLT is carefully choosing fencing/gate types and installation methods that will be durable and effective over the long run.

**5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.**

The COVID 19 pandemic highlighted the importance of outdoor recreation to mental and physical health, and parks as an “essential service” to the community. Patwino Worrtila Kodoi Dihi has been specifically designed to provide these benefits to a wide range of people. Examples include:

- 11.4 miles of multi-use trails, including a 2-mile addition to the Bay Area Ridge Trail network, with benches at numerous scenic rest stops.
- 0.7 mile “outdoor-accessible” loop trail with several rest-area pullouts, a scenic vista, and accessible benches and picnic tables.
- Accessible “welcome plaza” in the parking/trailhead area, including ADA restrooms, the main signage pavilion, an accessible picnic area and pathway, ADA water fountain/bottle filler, native “sensory garden,” and visitor-friendly fencing to create safe separation between visitor gathering areas and parking areas.
- Interpretive signage and QR code links that help visitors connect to the landscape and its inhabitants (human and otherwise).

**6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.**

The planning process for the new park has been highly collaborative, starting with the 2011/12 fundraising campaign to acquire the property, continuing through development planning to obtain County approval for public recreational uses in an area zoned for agriculture, and throughout design of public access improvements. SLT engaged the community through meetings, on-site planning sessions, tours, plan reviews, and outreach via the media and SLT’s communications platforms. Participants have included SLT staff, Board and docents; design, engineering and environmental consultants; the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation; neighboring landowners; SLT’s grazing licensee; potential recreational and educational users of the park; the cities of Fairfield and Vallejo; Solano County; Bay Area Ridge Trail staff; and others.

Community support for the new park has been expressed through willingness to bring resources to the table (including a \$500k anonymous donor), enthusiastic engagement in planning; praise for improvements made to date (e.g., the accessible All Peoples Trail); and ongoing positive media coverage.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

Coastal Conservancy – previous authorization	\$200,000
<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation	\$1,254,874
SLT & Private Donors	\$997,165
Solano Orderly Growth Committee	\$584,311
City/County Tax Assessment	\$254,576
NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program	\$82,000
To be raised	\$2,227,074
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$6,000,000</b>

Conservancy funding is anticipated to come from a Fiscal Year 2022/23 appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy for the purpose of climate resilience. These funds may be used for the purposes of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Chapter 4.5 of Division 21). (Section 52 of Budget Trailer Bill SB 155 (2021).) The proposed project is consistent with this funding source because it will promote, assist, and enhance provision of open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purpose—one of the goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. SLT is matching Conservancy funds with those secured from a mix of other grants, institutional sources, and individual gifts.

Unless specifically identified as “Required Match,” the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. The Conservancy does not typically require matching funds or in-kind services, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from

other funders or of in-kind services. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete a project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective 5**, the proposed project constitutes a project to build recreational facilities and amenities.

**COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

On June 20, 2017, the Solano County Department of Resource Management adopted the "Mitigated Negative Declaration of the Solano County Department of Resource Management – Rockville Trails Preserve" (MND) which addresses the potential impacts of the proposed project. On February 6, 2020, the Conservancy considered the MND and made findings regarding the project's potential environmental effects. Since then, the County approved a minor design change that moved visitor entry point to an existing entry gate and access road, and concluded no additional CEQA documentation was necessary. The project otherwise remains unchanged from its description in the MND. There is no new information or change in circumstances that would require a re-evaluation of the potential environmental effects of the project. (14 Cal Code. Regs. Section 15162(b)). Accordingly, the proposed authorization remains consistent with the CEQA findings adopted by the Conservancy and no new CEQA document is required.