



March 22, 2023

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
California State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay Street Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chairman Bosco,

California Department of Parks and Recreation is very supportive of the Smith River Alliance's proposed Point Saint George Coastal Trail Design and Permitting Project. This project involves preparing final designs, permit applications, and interpretive planning for the Point Saint George Coastal Trail Project, which consists of construction of approximately 1.25 miles of coastal trail, resource protection, interpretive content, and improvements to the main trailhead parking area at Point Saint George in Del Norte County that is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife with adjacent lands being owned by California Department of Parks and Recreation and Del Norte County.

Del Norte County will benefit from this project in a myriad of ways, including having an underutilized coastal area enhanced in such a way that will allow for greater use and enjoyment by both the local community and the millions of visitors that travel through Del Norte County while visiting nearby Redwood National and State Parks. This increase in tourism, centrally located near Crescent City, will provide economic benefits for this underserved community.

The Point Saint George Coastal Trail Project will fill a gap in the California Coastal Trail, protect sensitive resources, improve public safety, and provide amenities at a natural area that has the opportunity to be an important open space destination for both tourists and the local community. Approximately 0.4 miles of the new trail (located on Department of Parks and Recreation property) will be accessible to people in wheelchairs and with limited mobility. The project will reduce impacts from informal trails on sensitive natural resources by closing those trails and designating one formal trail in their place and will protect sensitive cultural resources by capping sites that are currently being exposed through erosion. It will reduce unsafe use of the parking area after hours. Currently, the parking area is a large open area that is ungated and is frequently used in the middle of the night for reckless driving. The project designs will include a gate, limiting the use of the site to dawn to dusk hours, and will also demarcate a one-way route of travel and add a speed table and curbs, which will reduce opportunities for reckless driving. The designs will include a restroom and picnic area. Additionally, it will also provide interpretive content, allowing visitors to learn more about and connect to the cultural significance of the site to the Tolowa people, as well as the site's recent history and natural resources.

The project will implement priority management actions identified in the 2004 Point St. George Management Plan (Plan), which was adopted by the County of Del Norte and by the Conservancy. The Plan was prepared collaboratively by the County of Del Norte, Conservancy, California State Parks, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation, and the Elk Valley Rancheria, with input from local residents. The Plan identified the need to balance public use with the protection of cultural and natural resources, and prioritized designating the coastal trail alignment, providing parking and an accessible trail to an overlook

for wheelchair users, protecting cultural sites, and preparing interpretive materials, all of which will be implemented by the project.

We respectfully encourage you to support this important project to enhance tourism and public access to the coast for an underserved coastal community in Del Norte County.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Victor Bjelajac

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Department of Parks and Recreation

North Coast Redwoods District