

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

February 15, 2024

**COASTAL STORIES GRANT PROGRAM AMPLIFICATION**

Project No. 23-078-10

Project Managers: Shalini Kannan and Emely Lopez

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Consideration and authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Public Media Group of Southern California to develop multimedia content documenting the Coastal Stories Grant Program, produce and host a webpage, and conduct outreach to reach a broad audience.

**LOCATION:** Statewide/digital (see Exhibit 1)

*EXHIBITS*

[Exhibit 1: November 30, 2023, Staff Recommendation](#)

[Exhibit 2: September 22, 2022, Staff Recommendation](#)

**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

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

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to Public Media Group of Southern California (“the grantee”) to develop multimedia content documenting the Coastal Stories Grant Program, produce and host a webpage for this project, and conduct outreach.

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

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding implementing a system of public accessways to and along the California coast.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
3. Public Media Group of Southern California is a nonprofit organization organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a grant of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to Public Media Group of Southern California, doing business as PBS SoCal to produce videos, develop multimedia content, and document the Coastal Stories Grant Program (the “project”). In 2022 and 2023, staff held two competitive Coastal Stories grant rounds and the Conservancy authorized fourteen grants to nonprofits, tribes, and public agencies for storytelling and interpretive projects that share stories of communities that have been systemically excluded from coastal access. The purpose of this project is to amplify the impact of these stories beyond the physical locations of their installations by producing multimedia content and a webpage that highlights them for a wider public audience.

The Coastal Stories grant program aims to make the outdoors more welcoming to people and communities that historically and systemically face barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast by documenting and sharing the histories and stories of underrepresented communities. The fourteen Coastal Stories projects funded and underway share a wide diversity of Californian perspectives - including the Wiyot reclaiming Wigi, their ancestral territory around Humboldt Bay in the north coast, and Latinx surfers sharing stories through a mural in Encinitas in the south coast. Further grant program history and background, program priorities, and descriptions of the fourteen projects can be found in the attached September 2022 and November 2023 staff recommendations (Exhibits 1 & 2).

The funded Coastal Stories projects tie meaningful stories to physical installations like signage and murals in outdoor parks and public places. This project will digitally amplify and memorialize the stories that are being developed by Coastal Stories grantees. The grantee will work with Coastal Stories project leads and Conservancy staff to develop short videos and other multimedia content documenting the individual Coastal Stories projects. They plan to conduct interviews, capture photos and videos, and produce media content. The content will be housed on the PBS SoCal website ([www.pbssocal.org](http://www.pbssocal.org)) - and may include an interactive map and links. The grantee will amplify the stories with their online platform and will conduct outreach to publicize the content produced through the project. The grantee will ensure that the Coastal Stories project leads have input in the outreach plan.

Publicizing and broadcasting the stories to a larger audience will increase the impact of the Coastal Stories grants, help to normalize new perspectives, and shift the culture towards more inclusion in outdoor spaces. The webpage produced will be a resource for Coastal Stories grantees to broaden the impact of their stories, and for the Conservancy to further fulfill its grant program mission of fostering inclusion and belonging for all Californians in outdoor spaces.

### **Grant Applicant Qualifications:**

Founded in 1964, PBS SoCal is the primary public media station for more than 18 million people residing across ten counties in Central and Southern California. It serves one of the largest geographic areas and most diverse populations of any public television market in the country. PBS SoCal is dedicated to advancing values of inclusion and supporting progress towards greater equality. A leader in multi-platform innovation and public service media, PBS SoCal creates, curates, and distributes content to educate and connect people to each other and to the wider world. PBS SoCal provides informative and educational content that is free and accessible to community members where they are—on broadcast television, via on-demand streaming services, and across digital and social media platforms.

The grantee managed a Conservancy grant in the past (2014-2016) for “Coastal Trail – Then and Now,” doing similar work to share stories of the Coastal Trail and present them on a public webpage with the goal of reaching a wide audience of Californians.

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

The proposed 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.**

This project will build on and expand the impact of the Conservancy’s Coastal Stories grants which aim to make outdoor spaces and interpretive centers feel welcoming and inclusive for all Californians by documenting and sharing the histories and stories of underrepresented communities. As a part of the Conservancy’s Explore the Coast program, this effort is intended to make the outdoors more welcoming to people and communities that face barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. The diverse stories bring perspective to what outdoor recreation looks like to different communities, and more Californians will be able to see themselves reflected in these stories. Additionally, amplifying the stories helps the Conservancy achieve public access goals and goals of its Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines.

**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.**

Ten of the Coastal Stories grants are documenting and amplifying tribal stories for their communities and the public. Tribes will tell their stories in their own voices, in the way that their communities would like to present them. Conservancy staff will work with the grantee to facilitate tribal connections and relationships. See Exhibits 2 and 3 to learn more about tribal stories in development through Coastal Stories grants. Overall, the project will shed light on tribes' cultural relationships to land and make more visible California Native American leadership and perspectives on the California coast and outdoor spaces.

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

This project will create a webpage, videos, multimedia content, and digital files (audio, video, and text). Coastal Stories grantees and partners will collaborate on the development of the content. The grantee is committed to maintaining the webpage and content for 5 years and will provide files to Coastal Stories grantees and the Conservancy for reuse. Conservancy staff may also seek a long-term repository for this content in additional public locations, such as the California Museum.

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

The primary purpose of Coastal Stories projects is to create a more inclusive and welcoming outdoor environment for communities that have been historically excluded in California. This story amplification project will enhance recreational opportunities by publicizing and drawing attention to parks and open spaces that provide particularly culturally inclusive experiences. The project will also help increase cultural representation and normalize the diverse connections Californians have with outdoor spaces. Coastal Stories grantees and their communities will see their stories and the murals, modern and inclusive signage, and other interpretive exhibits shared on a widely used website. This will create community empowerment, make people feel seen and welcomed outdoors, and will resonate with many other Californians throughout the state.

Additionally, the content produced will provide educational opportunities for the public to learn about different communities' connection to California's outdoors, whether it be historical or present relationships. This will also be an opportunity to preserve community stories that have been orally passed on through generations.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

The anticipated source of Conservancy funding for the proposed project is a fiscal year 2021-2022 appropriation to the Conservancy from the General Fund specifically for the “Explore the Coast Program”. As a part of the Conservancy’s Explore the Coast program, Coastal Stories grants seek to make the outdoors more welcoming to people and communities that face barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

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

Funding this project is consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Chapter 9 of Division 21 (Sections 31400 et seq.) of the Public Resources Code. This chapter discusses establishing a system of public accessways to and along the California coast. Section 31400 states the Legislature’s intent that the Conservancy play a principal role in implementing a system of public accessways to and along the state’s coastline, including San Francisco Bay.

The proposed project will be funded by the Conservancy to implement public access objectives and enhance public access by fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion on public lands to make them more accessible for all Californians. Section 31400.3 authorizes the Conservancy to provide such assistance as is required to aid public agencies and nonprofit organizations in establishing a system of public coastal accessways and related functions necessary to meet the objectives of this division. While this project doesn’t involve any land management or purchase, it will provide the related function of promoting access for diverse and underrepresented communities.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Consistent with **Goal 1.1 Commit Funding to Benefit Systematically Excluded Communities**, this project will benefit systematically excluded communities by sharing and normalizing their stories. The project will include engagement with and participation by people from systemically excluded communities, reduce barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast for members of the community, and elevate voices from the community in public media.

Consistent with **Goal 2.2 Coastal Stories Program**, the project will plan, develop, and implement storytelling materials that represent communities and voices that have been historically excluded from accounts of California’s coast and publicly accessible lands.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

This project is CEQA-exempt as it is not considered a “project” under Section 15378, as it is purely digital and does not have the potential for a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change on the environment.

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