

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 5, 2024

CASTROVILLE TO THE COAST ACQUISITION AND PLANNING AUGMENTATION

Project No. 23-011-01
Project Manager: Rachel Couch

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$79,120 to augment the Conservancy grant authorized on June 1, 2023, which provided funding to the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation to conduct pre-acquisition activities, coordinate with landowners and key stakeholders, acquire a conservation easement over 24 acres of agricultural land, and prepare conceptual designs for floodplain restoration and coastal access along Tembladero Slough, between Castroville and Salinas River State Beach.

LOCATION: Monterey County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [June 1, 2023 Conservancy 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 disbursement of seventy-nine thousand one hundred twenty dollars (\$79,120) to augment the Conservancy grant authorized on June 1, 2023, which provided funding to the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (the “grantee”) to conduct pre-acquisition activities, coordinate with landowners and key stakeholders, acquire a conservation easement over 24 acres of agricultural land, and prepare conceptual designs for floodplain restoration and coastal access along Tembladero Slough, between Castroville and Salinas River State Beach, Monterey County, subject to the conditions of the June 1, 2023 authorization. The total authorized amount will be one million one hundred sixty-nine thousand

and one hundred twenty dollars (\$1,169,120), including \$970,000 of grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding Integrated Marine and Coastal Resources.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$79,120 to augment the Conservancy grant authorized on June 1, 2023, which provided funding to the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (“CMSF”) to conduct pre-acquisition activities, coordinate with landowners and key stakeholders, acquire a conservation easement over 24 acres of agricultural land, and prepare conceptual designs for floodplain restoration and coastal access along Tembladero Slough in Monterey County for a total grant amount of \$1,169,120, including \$970,000 of grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The original grant was authorized by the Conservancy on June 1, 2023 (see Exhibit 2).

The augmentation will fill a gap in funding for the planning portion of the project. The gap arose when an anticipated grant that was going to be used to conduct robust community outreach and complete the technical studies including amphibian and fish surveys needed to establish a habitat baseline and prepare for permitting, was not awarded. The project is expected to be completed by September 2026. The first elements of the project including landowner coordination and other pre-acquisition activities are already underway. See Exhibit 2 for a more detailed project description.

Site Description: See Exhibit 2.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: See Exhibit 2.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, as described in the June 1, 2023 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy (proposed authorization)	\$79,120
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Coastal Conservancy (previous authorization)	\$120,000
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<i>via</i> a grant to Conservancy)	\$970,000
Department of Conservation MLRP grant	\$267,000
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$50,000
Project Total	\$1,486,120

The anticipated source of Conservancy funding for this project is an appropriation from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 75001 et seq. (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 authorizes the use of these funds for the purpose of protecting and restoring beaches, bays and coastal waters and watersheds, including for projects that promote access to and enjoyment of coastal resources of the state (PRC Section 75060). As required by projects funded with Proposition 84 funds, this project is consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation (Division 21 of the Public Resources Code), as mentioned in the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” section below and described more thoroughly in Exhibit 2.

Public Resources Code Section 75060(e) specifically allocates funds to the Conservancy for the protection of Monterey Bay and its watersheds. “Protection,” as defined in Public Resources Code Section 75005(m), includes “actions necessary to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property or natural resources and includes acquisition, development, restoration, preservation and interpretation.” Consistent with these provisions, this proposed project will acquire a conservation easement over and restore floodplain habitat and improve coastal access and enjoyment of Tembladero Slough, located within a Monterey Bay watershed.

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 ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation as described in the June 1, 2023 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as described in the June 1, 2023 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:

The proposed project remains consistent with the 2018 Greater Monterey County IRWMP as described in the June 1, 2023 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The project elements have not changed since the June 1, 2023 authorization and remain exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as described in the June 1, 2023 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).