

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
April 17, 2025

CALVI ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Project No. 25-009-01
Project Manager: Joel Gerwein

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,103,500 to LandPaths to undertake the Calvi Acquisition and Management Planning Project, consisting of acquiring the 84-acre Calvi property in Occidental, Sonoma County for preservation of open space, protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, tribal cultural resource protection, and tribal and public access; and preparing a management plan, conceptual designs, and permit applications.

LOCATION: Occidental, Sonoma County

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)
 - Exhibit 2: [Photos](#)
 - Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)
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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 a grant of an amount not to exceed one million one hundred three thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,103,500) to LandPaths (“the grantee”) to undertake the Calvi Acquisition and Management Planning Project, consisting of acquiring the 84-acre Calvi property in Occidental, Sonoma County (County Assessor’s Parcel Numbers 073-280-064 and 073-290-056) for preservation of open space, protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, tribal cultural resource protection, and tribal and public access; and preparing a management plan, conceptual designs, and permit applications (“the project”).

This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds for the acquisition, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer):

- a. All relevant acquisition documents for the acquisition, including, without limitation, the appraisal, purchase and sale agreement, deed, escrow instructions, environmental or hazardous materials assessment, and title report;
 - b. A baseline conditions report; and
 - c. Evidence that sufficient funds are available to complete the acquisition.
2. The grantee shall pay no more than fair market value for the property, as established in an appraisal approved by the Executive Officer.
 3. The property acquired under this authorization shall be managed and operated for the purposes of preservation of open space, protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, tribal cultural resource protection, and tribal and public access.
 4. The property shall be permanently dedicated to those purposes by an appropriate instrument approved by the Executive Officer.
 5. Conservancy funding, through the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), shall be acknowledged by erecting and maintaining a sign on the property or in a nearby publicly viewable area, the design and location of which are to be approved by the Executive Officer.
 6. Prior to commencement of the management planning tasks, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer the following:
 - a. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
 - b. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
 - c. Evidence that the acquisition is complete.
 7. To the extent appropriate, the grantee shall incorporate the guidelines of the Conservancy's 'Coastal Access Project Standards'.

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 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
 3. LandPaths is a nonprofit organization organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a grant of an amount not to exceed \$1,103,500 to Land Partners Through Stewardship (LandPaths) to undertake the Calvi Acquisition and Management Planning Project, consisting of acquiring the 84-acre Calvi property in Occidental, Sonoma County (County Assessor's Parcel Numbers 073-280-064 and 073-290-056) for preservation of open space, protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, tribal cultural resource protection, and tribal and public access; and preparing a management plan, conceptual designs, and permit applications. One million dollars of the grant would contribute towards the anticipated \$2,500,000 cost of acquiring the property, while the remaining \$103,500 would contribute to the \$274,300 cost of planning and immediate stewardship needs for the property. The \$103,500 in Conservancy funds for these costs would be utilized for planning. See the Project Financing section below for additional information.

The Calvi property is located in Occidental, an unincorporated community in western Sonoma County, on the coastal ridge north of Bodega Bay in the Salmon Creek watershed. The property is dominated by mature second and old-growth redwoods interspersed with coastal prairie. The property encompasses a portion of the headwaters of, as well as approximately 1,500 linear feet of, Fay Creek, a tributary to Salmon Creek, which supports an active run of steelhead trout and historically supported coho salmon. A series of earthen dams likely placed during earlier logging and milling operations has altered the native thalweg of the riparian area. The resulting artificial ponds appear to pose barriers to fish passage and could potentially be restored to provide passage and off channel habitat. According to the Bay Area Conservation Lands Network 2.0, 98% of the property is categorized as essential habitat with rarity rankings of 1 & 2. A seam of serpentine soil runs through the property and accounts for approximately 10% of its total area. The serpentine conifer forest and serpentine grassland on the property are high priority habitats for protection because of the rare endemic species they support. Portions of the property offer beautiful views from higher elevations across the forested slopes of the watershed.

The property is ~0.2 miles from the Grove of Old Trees, a 33-acre redwood forest that is a popular park. Grove of Old Trees was protected in 2000, with partial funding from the Conservancy. The small parking lot is full on weekends and holidays, and reservations are required on the busiest holidays. The high visitation numbers at Grove of Old Trees have led to problems with visitors parking illegally along the narrow one-lane Fitzpatrick Lane, blocking access for residents and emergency vehicles. In addition, the lack of restrooms, water, or other visitor amenities has made it challenging for school groups and the public to utilize the Grove of Old Trees. Management of the Calvi property to support public access could address these problems. About three acres of the Calvi property is developed with a small vineyard, dilapidated farmhouse and barn, and a two-bedroom, two-bathroom house that could provide visitor amenities to relieve the problems at Grove of Old Trees, as well as providing housing for a caretaker. Disturbed areas near the road could be developed to provide parking. The property could also provide hiking and potentially camping opportunities. Ranch roads on the property could serve as trails during an interim period while a trail system is planned. In the

future, other visitor amenities to support camping could be developed. In addition to the access point at Fitzpatrick Lane, the Calvi Ranch includes a road easement that connects to the east to Joy Road, which is a larger two-lane road that can support more traffic. This may provide another trail connection and reduce vehicle traffic on Fitzpatrick Lane.

The project vicinity is rated as high or very high wildfire risk in the 2022 Sonoma County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Multiple residences are near the property and are at risk for wildfire. Forests on the property appear to be in good condition, with mature, well-spaced trees and without excessive underbrush. Acquiring the property will facilitate management to enhance wildfire resilience of the forest. Management for wildfire resilience may involve actions such as the selective removal of understory vegetation or trees to create defensible space or a shaded fuel break, or to reduce fuel loading. Wildfire resilience management would need to be reviewed for compatibility with habitat value for wildlife species of concern.

Currently, the property is privately owned by the Calvi family, who acquired the property in 1935 and has lived on the property since the 1950s. The family is interested in seeing the property conserved and managed for public access. The property consists of two legal parcels, zoned for rural residential development. The zoning allows further subdivision into two additional parcels and development with three additional residences. If not protected, the property could also be utilized for timber harvest, boutique vineyards, or other agriculture production.

The project is ready to proceed quickly. LandPaths has entered into a purchase and sale agreement (PSA) with the owner, regarding both parcels. A title report and Phase I study have been prepared for the property. A property appraisal and supporting timber valuation are being prepared. The PSA calls for a closing date of September 30, 2025.

The project includes, after the Calvi property is acquired, the preparation of a management plan for the property through a collaborative effort between LandPaths and the neighborhood group Friends of the Grove, other community members, and interested tribes. This plan will inform preparation of an application to the County for a Conditional Use Permit to allow the 84-acre Calvi property to be used as a public park, supporting access and overnight camping, in connection with the Grove of Old Trees. The project will conduct planning for the management of the property to support the acquisition purposes. The planning is expected to include a LandSmart assessment (see below) or its equivalent and cultural resource survey. The LandSmart assessment, expected to be conducted by the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, will focus on assessing and mapping natural resources and providing recommendations for their enhancement. It will include a wetland delineation, stream assessment, erosion assessment, and riparian enhancement plan. The resulting management plan will include conceptual designs for trails and visitor amenities and a framework for forest management and habitat protection and enhancement.

LandPaths will provide long-term management for the Calvi property. They currently implement long-term management, maintenance, and monitoring for over 2,000 acres in Sonoma County. As part of this long-term stewardship plan, LandPaths will fundraise for the first three years of estimated stewardship costs during the acquisition phase, and create

programs with partners, such as Young Stewards, Resilience Workforce, and North Bay Jobs with Justice that will support stewardship and workforce development.

Site Description: The Calvi property is comprised of two legal parcels, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 073-280-064 and 073-290-056; and consists of 84 acres, predominantly with mature second and old-growth redwoods interspersed with coastal prairie. One old redwood tree on the property is more than 13 feet in diameter and well over 1,000 years of age. The upland coastal prairie features distinct stands of redwood, bay laurel and coast live oak. The property provides habitat for wildlife species of concern, including the burrowing owl, northern spotted owl, California giant salamander, northern harrier, western pond turtle, Bay checkerspot, Myrtle's silverspot, mountain lion, red tree vole, and ringtail. The property was historically managed for sustainable timber harvest, and the landowner's father operated a small sawmill, originally powered by a Ford Model T engine.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: LandPaths, over its nearly 30-year history, has been directly involved with 11 acquisition projects, all successful, protecting thousands of acres across Sonoma County. Of those acquisitions, six remain under LandPaths' ownership, programming, and stewardship responsibility. LandPaths, with a skilled and experienced Finance and Administration Director, manages numerous City, County, and State grants for acquisition projects and public access programming, including funding from the State Coastal Conservancy. Conservancy grants to LandPaths have included a 2011 grant for the Rancho Mark West Acquisition, a grant in 2000 for the Grove of Old Trees Acquisition, and eight other grants for trail construction and planning, outdoor recreation and education programming, and fuel management.

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 2023-2027 Strategic Plan" section below.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

The project is feasible and advances statewide and regional goals of conservation, as stated in the Pathways to 30x30 Strategy and the San Francisco Bay Area Conservation Lands Network, and public access, as stated in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The project leverages non-state resources, as a portion of the property value will be donated, and private donations will help fund the acquisition. The management planning budget is

reasonable. The project will provide important benefits to Californians, including the protection of significant habitat and the provision of public access.

3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes.

LandPaths is currently conducting outreach to tribes to seek collaboration on management planning for the property. LandPaths has an established relationship with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, with whom it regularly collaborates on active land stewardship to bring fire and other traditional ecological management and knowledge back to the land and community. With the intention of cultivating right relations with Indigenous people of this area, LandPaths has committed to developing tribal access and gathering agreements.

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

The acquisition of the Calvi property will provide protection in perpetuity. Management planning for the property will provide a framework to identify, protect, and enhance the property’s sensitive natural and cultural resources. Public access to the property will be feasible over the long term, as the property is not vulnerable to sea level rise and appropriate management should allow the natural communities on the property to be resilient to climate change impacts, such as wildfire and drought.

5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

The project will protect significant old growth and mature redwood forests and serpentine forest and prairie, which are important natural communities. In addition, the property has the potential to provide public access to the public, including underserved communities through programming to be offered by LandPaths. In addition, the project will develop tribal access arrangements for the property.

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

The project will incorporate meaningful community engagement and tribal engagement as part of the management planning process.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,103,500
Private Donors	\$1,600,800
To Be Determined	\$70,000
Project Total	\$2,774,300

Conservancy funding is anticipated to come from a Fiscal Year 2023/2024 appropriation from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), codified at Public Resources Code Sections 80000-80173. Chapter 9 of Proposition 68 allows funds for “protection of beaches, bays, wetlands, and coastal watershed resources” in accordance with Division 21 and for “protection, restoration, and improvement of coastal forest watersheds” (Section 80120(c), (e)). “Protection” includes

acquisitions and actions necessary to improve access to public open-space areas (Section 80002(l)). This project is consistent with Chapter 9 because it will plan for improvement of coastal forest watersheds and public and tribal access and protection and enhancement of natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat. The project is consistent with the funding guidelines for expenditure of Proposition 68 adopted by the Conservancy on December 6, 2018 as described in various sections of the staff recommendation.

LandPaths has secured private donations of \$1,600,800 for the acquisition. LandPaths is pursuing funding sources for the remaining \$70,000 needed for the critical, immediate site needs, including a LandSmart Assessment, Cultural Resources Inventory, site clean-up, tribal relationship building, and access agreements. LandPaths is pursuing funding from the Resources Legacy Fund. LandPaths is pursuing additional private and public funding for the site planning process and a minimum of three years of stewardship needs.

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 authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding improving and protecting coastal and marine habitats (Section 31220). Section 31220(a) authorizes the Conservancy to provide grants for coastal watershed resources protection projects, if the projects meet one or more of the objectives detailed in Section 31220(b). Consistent with Section 31220(b), the project will achieve the following objectives: protect fish and wildlife habitat within a coastal watershed (Section 31220(b)(2)); acquire coastal wetlands and sensitive watershed lands, including watershed lands draining to sensitive coastal or marine areas (Section 31220(b)(6)); and provide for public access compatible with resource protection and restoration objectives (Section 31220(b)(8)). The project will acquire property interests that will protect 84 acres of sensitive watershed lands containing habitat for many species of conservation concern, including steelhead trout, the burrowing owl, and the northern spotted owl. As required by Section 31220(a), staff have consulted with the State Water Resources Control Board for consistency with Chapter 3 (Clean Beaches Program) (commencing with Section 30915) of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the clean beaches grant program.

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

Consistent with **Goal 3.1, Conserve Land**, the project will protect 84 acres of resources and public access land in a coastal watershed.

CONSISTENCY WITH INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:

Projects undertaken pursuant to Section 31220 of the Public Resources Code must be consistent with the following, if available and relevant: (1) Integrated Watershed Management Programs; (2) local watershed management plans; and (3) water quality control plans, adopted by the state and regional water boards.

The project is consistent with the 2007 North Coast Integrated Watershed Management Plan. The project helps implement Objectives 6 and 7 of Goal 3, Ecosystem Conservation and Enhancement, of the 2007 North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, as follows:

- Objective 6 - Conserve, enhance, and restore watersheds and aquatic ecosystems, including functions, habitats, and elements that support biological diversity.
- Objective 7 - Enhance salmonid populations by conserving, enhancing, and restoring required habitats and watershed processes.

Acquiring the property will facilitate planning and potential implementation of restoration projects to restore aquatic ecosystems and enhance salmonid populations.

The project is also consistent with the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast (adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region in 1988 and last updated in 2018) in that it will protect and facilitate the enhancement of the following designated beneficial uses for the Salmon Creek Hydrologic Area: recreation, cold freshwater habitat, wildlife habitat, and habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species (Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast, Table 2-1, pp. 2-8 to 2-12).

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The land acquisition component of the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15316 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), which exempts acquisition, sale, or transfers of land to establish a park where the land is in a natural condition and the management plan for the park has not yet been prepared; and categorically exempt under CEQA, pursuant to Section 15325 of Title 14 of the CCR, which exempts transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space, habitat, or historical resources. The project consists of acquiring property that is largely in its natural condition to protect the existing natural resources and to allow use as a park. The management plan is not yet complete and will inform preparation of a permit application to the County to use the property as a public park. The management plan is expected to include planning for a portion of the property to be developed with public trails and other visitor amenities. The protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat may include wildfire resilience efforts. CEQA will be complied with prior to any development of the property.

The planning component of the project is statutorily exempt from CEQA, pursuant to Section 15262 of Title 14 of the CCR, which exempts planning and feasibility studies for possible future actions that have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded; and categorically exempt under CEQA, pursuant to Section 15306 of Title 14 of the CCR, which exempts basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities. The project consists of preparing a management plan, conceptual designs, and a permit application; thus, the project involves planning and feasibility studies for possible future actions that have not yet been

approved or funded and basic data collection, research, and/or resource evaluation activities. Consistent with Sections 15262 and 15306, the project will consider environmental factors and not include activities that will result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

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