

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

September 18, 2025

NOYO CENTER MARINE FIELD STATION RESILIENCY PROJECT: AMENDMENT

Project No. 23-097-01

Project Manager: Amanda Townsel

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration and possible authorization to amend the Conservancy’s grant authorized on February 15, 2024 to the Noyo Center for Marine Science for the Noyo Center Marine Field Station Resiliency Project (formerly the Marine Ecosystem Resiliency Project) to expand the scope of the project to include dock repair implementation at the Noyo Center’s Marine Field Station located at Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg, Mendocino County.

LOCATION: Noyo Harbor, Fort Bragg, Mendocino County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [February 15, 2024, 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 amendment of the grant authorized on February 15, 2024 to the Noyo Center for Marine Science for the Noyo Center Marine Field Station Resiliency Project, formerly known as the Marine Field Station Resiliency Project (“the project”), to expand the scope of the project to include dock repair implementation at the Marine Field Station located at Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg, Mendocino County.

All other terms and conditions of the existing agreement shall remain in effect.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying Staff Recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Section 31113 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Climate Ready Program.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize amendment of the previously authorized grant to the Noyo Center for Marine Science (“Noyo Center”) for the Noyo Center Marine Field Station Resiliency Project (“project”) to expand the scope of the project to include dock repair implementation at the Marine Field Station located at Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg, Mendocino County (Exhibit 1).

On February 15, 2024, the Conservancy authorized a grant of \$400,000 to the Noyo Center for the project, which was then called the Marine Ecosystem Resiliency Project (Exhibit 2). The purpose of the grant authorization was, in part, to support the Noyo Center’s sea level rise adaptation initiatives at their Marine Field Station, which consisted of completing planning and design to improve the resilience of the Field Station building and associated vulnerable infrastructure including the main dock.

The project as originally authorized for a grant included planning, environmental review and preparing permit applications for replacement of the main dock and did not include conducting dock repairs. However, the planning work for the dock revealed that the resilience of the dock to sea level risk could be achieved through repairs and that such repairs would not require an environmental review document under CEQA. Noyo Center has determined that it is critically important to implement the dock repairs sooner rather than later since the absence of a fully functional dock severely limits the Noyo Center’s ability to host research vessels, to conduct ocean conservation work, and to bring students and community members onto the water to improve public understanding and stewardship of coastal resources.

The expanded scope of the project will enable the Noyo Center to utilize the previously authorized grant to implement dock repairs expeditiously, reducing disruptions to their research and educational programming. The repaired dock will provide safe access to the water, ensure its durability to king tides and flooding, and minimize damage from environmentally detrimental legacy materials, including deteriorating open cell foam floats.

Site Description: See Exhibit 1.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: See Exhibit 1.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

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

Selection Criteria

3. 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.

4. Project is a good investment of state resources.

In addition to repairing the Marine Station dock under the expanded project, which is a vital component of the Noyo Center's operations, the original project components will still be completed without requiring additional funds. Because the main dock will be repaired rather than replaced, the cost of the environmental review needed for the dock resilience planning is much reduced through use of a categorical CEQA exemption, allowing the Noyo Center to allocate funds to other project components identified in Exhibit 1, such as the regenerative aquaculture programs and planning for improving the resilience of the Marine Field Station.

5. 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.

See Exhibit 1.

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

In addition to the components envisioned in the original project, the completion of the dock repairs will make it more durable and resilient to sea level rise. Dock repairs are expected to extend the life of the dock for 20 years or more. The Noyo Center will monitor the dock and is committed to regular upkeep and maintenance to increase its lifespan.

7. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

See Exhibit 1.

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

See Exhibit 1.

PROJECT FINANCING

There will be no change to the project's funding as described in Exhibit 2.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The project remains consistent with Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31113(a-d) as described in Exhibit 1.

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

See Exhibit 1.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

See Exhibit 1 and;

The proposed authorization to use Conservancy grant funds to implement dock repairs is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15301. This exemption is applicable to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The repairs are also exempt under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15302, which exempts the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the replaced structure and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the replaced structure. The project will repair or replace deteriorated sections and components of an existing dock with no expansion of location, purpose, capacity or use.

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