

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

February 19, 2026

**ORMOND BEACH RESTORATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT:
PERMITTING AND IMPLEMENTATION - AUGMENTATION**

Project No. 90-048-09

Project Manager: Sally Gee

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse \$5,917,914 of funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to The Nature Conservancy to augment the State Coastal Conservancy grant authorized on February 15, 2024 in the amount of \$35,000,000, and subsequently augmented by the Executive Officer by \$125,223, for a total authorized amount of \$41,043,137, to (1) undertake the first phase of the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Project, consisting of final design, permitting, and implementation of restoration and public access improvements on 280 acres at Ormond Beach, and management of the Ormond Beach wetlands; and (2) to expand the scope of the first phase to include final design and permitting of an additional 108 acres, and possible implementation of restoration and public access improvements on the additional 108 acres in Ventura County.

LOCATION: Ormond Beach, City of Oxnard, Ventura County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [February 15, 2024, Staff Recommendation](#)

Exhibit 2: [First Phase Project Area](#)

Exhibit 3: [Expanded First Phase Project Area](#)

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 five million nine hundred seventeen thousand nine hundred fourteen dollars (\$5,917,914) of funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to The Nature Conservancy to augment the State Coastal Conservancy grant authorized on February 15, 2024 in the amount of \$35,000,000, and augmented by the Executive Officer by \$125,223, for a total authorized amount of \$41,043,137,

to (1) undertake the first phase of the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Project, consisting of final design, permitting, and implementation of restoration and public access improvements on 280 acres at Ormond Beach, and management of the Ormond Beach wetlands; and (2) to expand the scope of the first phase to include final design and permitting of an additional 108 acres, and possible implementation of restoration and public access improvements on the additional 108 acres in Ventura County (the “project”), subject to the conditions of the February 15, 2024 authorization.

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 6 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding coastal resource enhancement.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
3. The Nature Conservancy 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 disbursement of \$5,917,914 of funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to augment the State Coastal Conservancy grant authorized on February 15, 2024 in the amount of \$35,000,000, and augmented by the Executive Officer by \$125,223, for a total authorized amount of \$41,043,137, to (1) undertake the first phase of the Ormond Beach Restoration and Public Access Project (OBRAP), consisting of final design, permitting, and implementation of restoration and public access improvements on 280 acres at Ormond Beach, and management of the Ormond Beach wetlands; and (2) to expand the scope of the first phase to include final design and permitting of an additional 108 acres, and possible implementation of restoration and public access improvements on the additional 108 acres in Ventura County (the “project”).

Since the Conservancy’s February 15, 2024 authorization, the Conservancy and TNC have pursued additional federal funding to supplement the Conservancy’s funding to expand the project area and cover additional costs. In September 2025, the Conservancy was awarded a \$6,000,000 grant from NOAA’s Coastal Zone Management Habitat Protection and Restoration Grant Competition for the project, and staff recommends these funds be awarded to TNC to implement the project.

At the time of the Conservancy’s authorization in February 2024, the project (which is the first phase of OBRAP) consisted of restoring 280 acres, which was the project footprint at that time, and the grant amount was based on project costs developed in 2020. During design development, the project partners identified two additional areas within the OBRAP to include

in the first phase of restoration and public access improvements. These areas include a fallow agricultural field owned by TNC that could be restored to wetland habitat and a parcel owned by the City of Oxnard that the public indicated was a major public access point and that could be improved for public access. Inclusion of these areas in the first phase will increase the potential acres for restoration and public access improvements in the first phase by 108 acres and bring the project footprint for the first phase up to 388 acres. This additional acreage will increase the benefits to wildlife and wetlands habitats and provide major improvements to public access.

Additionally, costs for implementation have generally increased since the Conservancy's authorization. Updated cost estimates developed in 2025 for the project reflect increased costs for all aspects of the project, including earthwork, soil amendments needed to restore salt pannes, and public access infrastructure. Costs for TNC to implement the project also increase with the expanded scope.

The project includes refining final designs and permit applications for the entire expanded scope (388 acres) of the first phase of the OBRAP. However, there is currently a funding gap to implement the restoration and public access improvements on the full 388 acres of the project as will be designed; and therefore, the restoration and public access improvement areas to be implemented could range from 280 – 388 acres. Selection of the final project implementation area will be determined by balancing habitat restoration goals, public access benefits, and total funding available. The Conservancy, in partnership with TNC, will continue to secure external funds for the project, and continue to find cost savings during project design.

Site Description: Ormond Beach is located along the southern coast of Ventura County, California. It is situated within the City of Oxnard and is located between the City of Port Hueneme and Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu. The entire OBRAP area is an approximately 650-acre wetland and dune complex in the City of Oxnard, Ventura County, that consists of land owned and managed by the Conservancy, TNC, and the City of Oxnard.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: TNC is a 501(c)(3) organization that has successfully participated in large restoration projects in California (e.g., Suisun Marsh), across the nation (e.g., Chesapeake Bay), and internationally. TNC has the resources and expertise to oversee this restoration effort. TNC owns a portion of Ormond Beach and is currently managing its own land and the Conservancy's land. TNC is also currently implementing nesting bird protection and invasive plant removal at Ormond Beach while additional design development for the OBRAP occurs. TNC's work also includes environmental education training related to the wetlands; clean-up events; and public workshops, surveys, focus groups, and field trips at Ormond Beach.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The recommended authorization remains consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria last updated on September 23, 2021, as described in the February 15, 2024, staff recommendation (Exhibit 1).

PROJECT FINANCING

NOAA (via a grant to the Conservancy)	\$5,917,914
Coastal Conservancy (February 2024 Board Authorization)	\$35,000,000
Coastal Conservancy (Executive Officer Augmentation)	\$125,223
 Project Total	 \$41,043,137

The Conservancy was awarded a \$5,999,290 grant from NOAA through the FY2024 and FY2025 Coastal Zone Management Habitat Protection and Restoration Grant Competition. \$5,917,914 of this amount is recommended for disbursement to TNC. The remaining \$81,376 will be retained for Conservancy staff costs – grant and project management and related indirect costs.

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 recommended authorization remains consistent with the Conservancy's Enabling Legislation as described in the February 15, 2024, staff recommendation (Exhibit 1).

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

The recommended authorization remains consistent with the Conservancy's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan as described in the February 15, 2024, staff recommendation (Exhibit 1).

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's February 15, 2024, findings and authorization with respect to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (See Exhibit 1). The project is a phase of the OBRAP, which is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21080.56(a)(1). Expanding the first phase project area does not impact the Conservancy's findings that the OBRAP qualifies for the exemption under PRC section 21080.56 because the additional 108 acres being added to the first phase were included

in the OBRAP footprint. Thus the expanded project area does not trigger the need for an additional exemption concurrence from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or other CEQA documentation.