

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
February 19, 2026

PIERPONT BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN

Project No. 25-016-01
Project Manager: Sam Jenniches

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,242,182 to the City of Ventura to engage the community and to undertake the Pierpont Beach Management Plan, consisting of site assessment and engineering studies, design and conceptual planning for living shoreline and sand management activities, an implementation plan for a preferred alternative suite of projects, preparation of an environmental compliance documents, and preparation of permit applications at Pierpont Beach in Ventura County.

LOCATION: Pierpont Beach, City of Ventura, Ventura County

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Project Maps](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Project Photos](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)

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 two-hundred forty-two thousand one hundred eighty-two dollars (\$1,242,182) to the City of Ventura (“the grantee”) to undertake the Pierpont Beach Management Plan, consisting of the development of a management plan for the design of living shoreline and sand management activities at Pierpont Beach in Ventura County (the “project”).

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.

In addition, 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 3 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 a grant of up to \$1,242,182 to the City of Ventura (the "City") to undertake the Pierpont Beach Management Plan (PBMP), consisting of the development of a management plan for the design of living shoreline and sand management activities at Pierpont Beach in Ventura County (the "project").

Currently, Pierpont Beach and the adjacent community experience coastal erosion, sand loss, storm and wave inundation, and nuisance sand that impact public access to the beach as well as public and private property adjacent the beach. These impacts will increase as sea levels rise. Storm events of January and December of 2023 provided a glimpse into this future when severe erosion from high surf, coupled with king tides, caused the loss of a significant portion of beach sand, exposed once-buried rip-rap, and undermined public access stairways in multiple locations along the beach. Also, a rogue wave during the December 2023 storm caused flood damage to multiple structures and overran lane ends (where streets dead-end at the beach) injuring multiple people.

A 2011 Ventura County Superior Court Decision and Judgment found that the City is obligated to maintain the Shore Drive right-of-way to prevent buildup of sand mounds against residential properties and in the public stairwells that access the beach. Shore Drive is a 40-foot right-of-way located where the adjacent neighborhood meets the sandy beach. Subsequently in 2011, the City reached a settlement agreement with 15 beachfront property owners which specifies that wind-blown nuisance sand will be removed from the street ends that terminate at Pierpont Lane and the 15 settlement agreement properties twice per year. Currently, the City removes the sand and stages it offsite, outside the coastal zone, until it can be beneficially reused. In addition to meeting the obligations outlined in the non-regulatory settlement, development of the PBMP will also provide for the creation of valuable dune habitats that increase coastal resilience.

In 2013, the City, Coastal Commission, State Parks, Surfrider Foundation, representatives of the Pierpont community, and other stakeholders prepared a draft PBMP. However, the group disbanded and the plan was never adopted due to disagreements on the plan and division of

responsibilities. In 2022, City staff met with Coastal Commission and State Parks staff to discuss reinitiating the development of a PBMP. Subsequently, the City completed additional stakeholder discussions and created a roadmap for developing a new plan.

The project consists of preparing the PBMP. The PBMP will inform the design and construction of living shoreline features at Pierpont Beach that will increase resilience to sea level rise and coastal hazards. The project includes extensive public outreach and engagement, building upon previous engagement with established stakeholders. Specific strategies will be used to engage California Native American Tribes and community-based organizations addressing local environmental and social justice issues. The engagement process will also focus on severely disadvantaged and disadvantaged communities within ½ mile of the project site.

Development of the PBMP will be roughly divided into four phases. The first phase involves site assessment of existing cultural and biological resources and coastal engineering studies to assess local coastal dynamics, sand management, erosion control, sea level rise impacts and a coastal hazards analysis. The second phase involves design and conceptual planning for living shoreline components and sand management approaches and development of an adaptation pathways plan to identify mid-to long-term resilience activities that will complement the physical designs. The third phase involves development of a draft implementation plan for the preferred alternative as well as a draft monitoring and maintenance plan with performance criteria. The third phase will culminate in a draft PBMP for circulation with stakeholders and advisory groups. The fourth and final phase involves preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and initiation of permitting and approvals for the preferred alternative. The project will be done in compliance with the Ventura County Superior Court settlement agreement and will be consistent with the City's Local Coastal Program as well as the California Coastal Act.

All phases will be informed by the public outreach and engagement process that will continue throughout the project. Additionally, the project includes convening an advisory group of subject matter experts to meet as necessary to advise on the feasibility of the alternatives considered. This group will include experts on coastal processes and engineering, sand management, as well as representatives from land managers.

Site Description:

The proposed site is a highly frequented, sandy beach at the southern end of San Buenaventura State Beach, known locally as Pierpont Beach. Pierpont Beach spans approximately one mile between San Pedro Street and Greenock Lane. The southernmost portion of the beach between Camden Lane and Greenock Lane is owned by the City. The City also retains a 40-foot wide street right-of-way known as Shore Drive immediately seaward of the residences fronting the beach that extends from San Pedro Street to Greenock Lane (see Exhibit 2 for Project Maps). Shore Drive is not constructed or maintained as a public street but contains underground utilities and extends beyond the length of Pierpont Beach to the south and north. The remaining area of Pierpont Beach (seaward of Shore Drive and North of Camden Lane) is owned by California State Parks and is part of the San Buenaventura State Beach.

The topography of the site is relatively flat, with elevations ranging from 0 to 40 feet above mean sea level. The beach width varies from 150 feet to 50 feet, with the exception of the beach fronting Pierpont Elementary School which is 220 feet wide. Typically, the beach widens during the summer and fall and narrows during the winter and spring. The beach has areas of non-continuous dune hummocks mostly covered by non-native plants, such as iceplant and European beachgrass. There are 28 public access points located at street ends and distributed along the Project area.

Pierpont Beach provides important habitat for several special status plant and animal species, including marine mammals that are known to occur in open water and use the beach as haul out sites. The western snowy plover is a federally threatened and California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern. US Fish and Wildlife Service designated critical habitat is mapped along Pierpont Beach within the project area for the species. Additionally, small patches of a coastal dune system still exist within the project area. These areas are designated as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas under the California Coastal Act and the City's Local Coastal Program.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: The grantee has a proven track record of successfully administering grant funds and executing projects to restore, enhance, protect, and preserve the City's coastal zone. Over the past 20 years, the City has secured and effectively managed grants from the Conservancy and other agencies, totaling \$21.5 million. The City's staff is experienced in all aspects of project management, from planning and budgeting to implementation and reporting. The City has undertaken similar projects focused on habitat restoration and coastal resilience, including the Conservancy-funded Surfer's Point Managed Shoreline Retreat Phases I and II project. The City's well-established partnerships with local conservation organizations and experts further enhance the City's capacity to develop and manage the proposed coastal restoration project effectively.

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.**

The proposed project addresses the difficult management concern of nuisance sand at a popular public beach in Ventura, where sand moves landward impacting private property and public beach access infrastructure. In partnership with State Parks and the Coastal Commission, the project will use that nuisance sand as material for a living shoreline that will reduce the impacts of nuisance sand, create habitat, and create resilience against impacts of climate change and sea-level rise. The project is consistent with the City's Climate Action and

Resilience Plan (November 2024) and the PBMP will be integrated into the City's Local Coastal Plan update.

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.

The City will engage with tribes and sustain those efforts through the lifetime of the project. The tribes will determine the type of participation, which could include the creation of a tribal advisory committee or tribal representation in existing committees to provide recommendations on design elements, communication strategies, cultural monitoring, and planting palettes. If appropriate, stipends will be offered to support the active participation of tribal members in these roles. Additionally, if there is interest from tribal partners, the City will prioritize integration of tribes' expertise and perspectives of traditional knowledge into the PBMP.

Additionally, City and Conservancy staff will seek opportunities to leverage the engagement efforts of Phase 2 of the nearby Surfer's Point Managed Retreat Project, which is already underway and has many stakeholders in common.

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

The PBMP will include a long-term management, maintenance, and monitoring plan to address sand encroachment and dune and beach stability. To ensure the PBMP remains responsive to evolving environmental conditions and climate change, the City will integrate an Adaptation Pathways Plan to provide flexible strategies for addressing future climate change conditions, including sea level rise and coastal hazard impacts. The PBMP will include a priority list for maintenance triggers and a description of the operating procedures for sand maintenance and dune restoration activities. Regular monitoring, spanning three to five years, will assess physical and biological attributes using defined performance metrics, with annual reporting of topography, vegetation cover, beach width, weather conditions, and human impacts. The plan will undergo a recurring five-year review and renewal process under a Coastal Development Permit to ensure compliance with the California Coastal Act and the City's LCP, allowing for adjustments based on monitoring results.

5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

The PBMP will address long-standing sand maintenance issues at Pierpont Beach, providing significant community benefits by increasing coastal resilience, enhancing coastal habitats, and improving public access by reducing sand accumulation on access roads and ensuring safer, more reliable pathways to access the shoreline.

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

At the onset of the project, the grantee will begin implementation of a comprehensive community outreach and engagement program to provide opportunities for stakeholders and community members to inform the PBMP and offer valuable insights throughout the project's development. This program will also include informational content describing the benefits of living shorelines, sand management and dune habitat preservation. Particular focus will be

given to actively engage communities directly and indirectly affected by coastal hazards. Educational programs and community science initiatives will involve homeowners, visitors, Environmental Justice communities, and the severely disadvantaged and disadvantaged communities located within 0.5 miles of the project area.

The outreach program will include conventional town hall meetings, focus group meetings, and collaboration with agency stakeholders and community organizations. Both in-person and virtual events will be held to inform key project milestones to gather a wide range of perspectives. The outreach program will explore innovative tools, such as “walkshops” (guided tours of specific project areas), stipends for environmental justice community members, and other storytelling and communication methods to enhance community involvement. Outreach and engagement will continue through all phases of the project.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,242,182
Project Total	\$1,242,182

Conservancy funding for this authorization is expected to come from a Fiscal Year 2023 appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy for the purpose of “urgent sea level rise adaptation and coastal resilience needs using nature-based solutions or other strategies (The Budget Act of 2022, SB 154 as amended by the Budget Act of 2023, SB 101). The project qualifies for use of these funds because it will plan for nature-based solutions including restoration of dune habitat that are resilient to the effects of sea level rise and will provide shoreline protection for infrastructure and communities.

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 project is consistent with Section 31113 of Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, which establishes the Climate Ready Program and authorizes the Conservancy to address the impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy’s jurisdiction.

Pursuant to Section 31113(b)-(c), the Conservancy is authorized to award grants to public agencies to undertake projects within the Conservancy’s jurisdiction, “including, but not limited to, those that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources.” Consistent with this section, the proposed project will grant funds to the City of Ventura to prepare a plan

to restore dune habitat as a nature-based solution to address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge and flooding at Pierpont Beach in Ventura County, which is located within the coastal zone and therefore within the Conservancy's jurisdiction.

Pursuant to Section 31113(c)(1)-(2), the Conservancy must, to the extent allowed, prioritize projects that maximize public benefits and accomplish certain purposes, including reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, preserving and enhancing coastal wetlands and natural lands, providing recreational opportunities, reducing flood risk, and/or enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. Consistent with this section, the proposed project will prepare a plan to restore dune habitat as a nature-based solution to protect against flooding from sea level rise, while enhancing habitat at Pierpont Beach in Ventura County.

Section 31113(d)(1) requires the Conservancy to prioritize projects that use natural infrastructure to help coastal communities adapt to climate change and projects that provide multiple public benefits, including, but not limited to, protection of communities, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. Consistent with this section, the proposed project will plan to restore dune habitat as a nature-based solution to sea level rise, among other coastal hazards, at Pierpont Beach in Ventura County, to mitigate the impacts of sea level rise, protect communities and public access while enhancing coastal dune and other habitats.

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

Consistent with **Goal 1.3 Support Meaningful Engagement by Systemically Excluded Communities**, the project includes meaningful engagement techniques designed to increase rates of engagement by systematically excluded communities, including providing stipends, and using multiple types of meetings and venues.

Consistent with **Goal 3.2.1 Restore or Enhance Habitats**, the project includes planning for a project that will create dune habitat at Pierpont Beach.

Consistent with **Goal 4.1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Projects**, the project includes planning for a living shoreline at Pierpont Beach to enhance coastal resiliency to sea level rise.

Consistent with **Goal 4.3.1 Multi-Benefit Nature-Based Climate Adaptation**, the project includes planning for a living shoreline to enhance coastal resiliency to sea level rise, while also creating dune habitat, reducing impacts from nuisance sand and maintaining public access points at Pierpont Beach.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations, Section 15262, because it involves only planning studies and feasibility analyses for possible future actions that have not yet been approved or funded. The project is also categorically exempt under Section 15306, which exempts basic data collection and resource evaluation activities. Environmental factors will be considered in the studies undertaken pursuant to this authorization. The proposed project

consists of design and planning for a future project and includes site evaluation and environmental compliance documentation.

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