

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

November 30, 2023

COASTAL STORIES GRANT PROGRAM 2023

Project No. 23-078-01

Project Managers: Fanny Yang, Emely Lopez,
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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,104,736 to eight non-profit organizations for Coastal Stories projects that will create storytelling installations, murals, or interpretive materials that represent diverse communities' perspectives that historically have been excluded from narratives of California's coast and publicly accessible lands.

LOCATION: Statewide (see Exhibit 1)

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [Coastal Stories 2023 Grant Round Announcement](#)

Exhibit 3: [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 grants of a total amount not to exceed one million one hundred four thousand seven hundred thirty-six dollars (\$1,104,736) to eight nonprofit organizations for coastal storytelling projects that will create storytelling installations, murals, or interpretive materials that represent diverse communities' perspectives that historically have been excluded from narratives of California's coast and publicly accessible lands. The eight grantees, grant amounts, and project summaries are as follows (presented in alphabetical order):

- California Marine Sanctuary Foundation, fiscal sponsor for the Tribal Marine Stewardship Network: One hundred ninety-five thousand dollars (\$195,000) to gather, document, and interpret the traditional uses, practices, ceremonies, and ways of stewarding coastal marine resources of California Native American tribes along the California Coast. These stories will encompass sustainable practices, ways of living in better harmony with nature, and connections to place. The stories will be converted into easily understandable educational content for the public.
- Coastal Watershed Council: One hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$175,000) to implement the San Lorenzo River Public Art Interpretation Project, which includes planning, designing, and installing two interpretive signs with QR codes that link to video and web content that will increase storytelling and representation of Indigenous, Chinese, and Latinx communities in public spaces in the City of Santa Cruz.
- East Palo Alto Community Archive: Two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to implement the East Palo Alto Community Heroes and Legends Project, which will engage communities in developing 3-5 physical interpretive and art installations at Cooley Landing Park to tell the history of the diverse community who contributed to the development of the park and the establishment of the 40-year-old city amidst racist redlining practices.
- Ink People Center for the Arts: Ninety-eight thousand dollars (\$98,000) to interview, record, and archive diverse community voices with accompanying exhibits at the Brenda Tuxford Gallery and Da Gou Rou Louwi' Cultural Center in Eureka, install a listening station at the Eureka Visitor Center, and make transcriptions of collected stories available as electronic versions via QR codes on signage along the Eureka Waterfront and Halverson Park.
- Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy: Sixty-three thousand six hundred thirty-six dollars (\$63,636) to partner with the Tongva Cultural Collective to develop audio-visual storytelling elements featuring Tongva-narrated stories and install connected wayfinding and native plant signage in a native plant garden at the White Point Nature Preserve. The project will tell a contemporary story of a coastal native community that has persevered against great odds and is growing stronger through language revitalization and facilitating Tongva people's return to their ancestral lands.
- Save the Redwoods League: One hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$175,000) to plan, design, and fabricate new interpretive exhibits consisting of kiosks, signs, and interactive exhibits and experiences at a newly constructed comfort station at Founders Grove in Humboldt Redwoods State Park on the Avenue of the Giants in Humboldt County. New interpretive elements will incorporate the story of women who were key members of the coast redwood conservation movement and the current and ongoing stewardship stories of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria and Eel River Wailaki Tribe.

- Un Mar De Colores: Twenty-eight thousand two hundred dollars (\$28,200) to plan, design, and install an interactive mural representing the Latinx community recreating and surfing outdoors along the scenic coast highway in Encinitas, CA.
- Watsonville Wetlands Watch: One hundred sixty-nine thousand nine hundred dollars (\$169,900) to develop and install a community-designed mosaic mural and mosaic-bordered paths with the theme of “Migrations” at the new Watsonville Nature Center in Watsonville to welcome visitors with an inclusive depiction of the Pajaro Valley and wetlands in Santa Cruz County.

Before 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 the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgment of Conservancy funding.
4. Any other applicable agreements determined necessary for the project by the Conservancy’s Executive Officer.

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 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding implementing a system of public accessways to and along the California coast.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
3. The proposed grantees are nonprofit organizations organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$1,104,736 to eight nonprofit organizations for coastal storytelling projects that will create storytelling installations, murals, or interpretive materials that represent diverse communities’ perspectives that historically have been excluded from narratives of California’s coast and publicly accessible lands. These projects will enhance public access to lands within the Conservancy’s jurisdiction by sharing culturally diverse stories that reflect the residents of California. The projects will be led by communities who have been historically excluded from narratives of California’s coast and publicly accessible lands.

The Coastal Stories grant program will make the outdoors more welcoming to people and communities that historically and systemically face barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. The priorities of the Coastal Stories grant program are to:

- Promote a sense of belonging in outdoor spaces by presenting perspectives that include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and other historically excluded communities.
- Engage representatives of BIPOC and other historically excluded communities to develop and share their coastal perspectives and stories.
- Improve educational content in California’s outdoor spaces by correcting one-sided histories, retelling stories more appropriately and inclusively, and developing new content that shares untold stories.
- Use creative forms of community engagement.
- Create stories that are free and publicly accessible for the community and intended audiences.

Projects will engage community members to develop and tell their stories in their preferred format. The projects will hire community artists or members to design and implement murals or other art installations. The proposed projects will add storytelling and interpretive elements to existing public accessways, trails, interpretive centers, and other public spaces. Though project maintenance terms will vary, Conservancy staff will seek partnerships with external organizations to preserve the stories produced and steward them into the future as part of the story of California. Staff also aim to amplify the stories produced through documentation of the grant and project process, and the development and sharing of a Coastal Story library.

The Request for Preproposals for the 2023-2024 Coastal Stories grant round was released on February 1, 2023. The Conservancy received 37 pre-proposals requesting approximately \$5.1 million in Conservancy funding. From the submitted pre-proposals, the Conservancy staff invited 12 full proposals from projects that best met the grant program’s priorities and eligibility. Eight projects were selected for funding recommendation out of the 12 submitted proposals. These eight projects will develop and share powerful stories, demonstrate effective partnerships between communities and landowners, use creative forms of storytelling, and have a plan for ongoing maintenance. Staff recommend funding the following eight projects for the 2023-2024 Coastal Stories grant round. The projects are arranged alphabetically by grantee. Each individual project summary includes the grantee, project name, recommended funding amount, geographic region of the participants, and a brief project description.

California Marine Sanctuary Foundation,	\$195,000
Fiscal sponsor for the Tribal Marine Stewards Network	
Honoring the Traditions and Connections of Tribes	North, Bay, and Central Coast

This project will be the first to draw upon tribal partnerships of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network (TMSN) to tell historical, ecological, and cultural stories. TMSN is an alliance of the

following five Tribal Nations: Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Resighini Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, and Santa Ynez Band of Chumash. Under a grant from the Ocean Protection Council, the TMSN has been working collaboratively to steward, protect, and restore the ocean and coastal resources within their ancestral territories. To date, TMSN stewards over 220 miles of California coastline. For thousands of years, these Tribal Nations relied upon their ocean and coastal territories. Each California Native American Tribe has its geographical boundaries and descendants with traditional practices in specific places, now known as Santa Barbara, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte. With their deeply rooted connections to the land, the tribes will share Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Tribal Science on management practices with the public and preserve this knowledge for each Tribe. TMSN will gather, document, and interpret captivating stories from their rich history of stewardship. For example, the project will tell the story of the tomol, the oldest ocean-going watercraft in North America, and the journey of Chumash youth via tomol to Santa Cruz Island in late 2023. These Tribal stories will be collected through various methods, using youth videos and interviews with elders, family interviews, tribal forums, and outreach, and sifting through digital, oral, and written histories to develop content. Specifically, the tribes will develop three signs, five videos, one or more youth activity booklets, one brochure, and web content that will be shared widely. Each tribe will collect their stories through the best methods appropriate for reaching out to families, elders, communities, and Tribal Councils. The project outcomes will be improved educational content that retells Tribal histories and roles in more inclusive ways, sharing untold experiences and ecological histories along the coast.

Site Description: There will be three interpretive signs from the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians to be located at: 1) Kashia Coastal Reserve at 29601 CA-1, Jenner, on a property reacquired by the Tribe in 2015 located along the Sonoma County coast directly adjacent to Salt Point State Park; 2) Salt Point State Park at 25050 CA-1, Jenner, where Kashia has a rich history. Located along the Sonoma County coast north of Fort Ross, the park expands some 9 miles along the coast; and 3) Gualala Point Regional Park at 42401 CA-1, Gualala, bordering the Gualala River and Mendocino County. All other tribes in the TMSN will create videos or interpretive material and share the stories in their communities, which includes Del Norte County, Humboldt County, Santa Cruz County, and Santa Barbara County.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (CMSF) is a non-profit that has successfully implemented large complex projects since 1995. CMSF has substantial experience managing private and public funding and providing fiscal sponsorship. CMSF project experience allows them to support the Tribal Marine Stewards Network through fiscal sponsorship and coastal project management support. CMSF will ensure compliance with all grant requirements and have an accounting system to track grant expenditures appropriately.

Coastal Watershed Council	\$175,000
San Lorenzo River Public Art Interpretation Project	Central Coast

The Coastal Watershed Council (CWC) will tell stories of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe (represented in the modern day by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band), and Chinese and Latinx immigrants along the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz. One of the project sites, “Aulintak,” shares the heritage of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band at Poets Park, and CWC will work with the Tribe to record their history and share their stories of the meaning of this place and its name. At the Chinatown Bridge site in the Santa Cruz Riverwalk Park, storytelling will center around the Chinatown that existed here prior to its destruction by flooding in 1955. There is also a large Latinx immigrant community, and CWC will provide space for the community to co-create and center their story at their local park. CWC will work with community leaders to contract with artists, local historians, translation services, graphic designers, web developers, and videographers to develop story content, website landing page, and videos. Additionally, through the community engagement process, CWC will work with community partners to identify storytellers. The storytellers will be interviewed to create a community story video and signage. The signs, which will be co-developed with the community, will also have QR codes that link to online multimedia content in the form of three individual web pages and three videos telling the story of the river and the three communities that shaped it. The stories and signage will include Spanish and Chinese translations. The signage will be installed in coordination with the City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department. By engaging community members whose stories have been excluded from histories of the San Lorenzo River and surrounding areas, this project will elevate their voices in places of cultural and historical significance for them, making these outdoor public places more inclusive of those who have played a part in their making. The project will build on earlier work by the CWC. From 2019-2021, the CWC and its partners installed three highly visible public art projects to uplift stories from three underrepresented communities that are the focus of this project.

Site Description: The signage sites will be by the Chinatown Bridge in Santa Cruz Riverwalk Park and in Poet’s Park, both owned and operated by the City of Santa Cruz. The sites contain existing public art pieces associated with the river and the communities of focus that CWC and partners implemented.

The Chinatown Bridge Public Art Project currently has a non-traditional Chinese-style gate with a mosaic-tiled water dragon on top of it at the west end of the city’s Chinatown Bridge to commemorate the Chinatown that once stood at the site, destroyed by the December 1955 flood. This bridge has a lot of foot traffic and is visited by residents, local college students, and visitors.

CWC led additional community art projects in Beach Flats Park (2019) and Poet’s Park (2021), approximately one block away. At these sites, the community painted murals that reflect neighborhood identity and culture. Additionally, murals were painted around storm drains to draw attention to stormwater runoff pollution that directly impacts the community’s environment and local ocean water. These parks are located a block from the Santa Cruz Beach boardwalk, attracting about 4 million tourists annually.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: CWC is a non-profit based in Santa Cruz, working to transform the lower San Lorenzo River into a community destination by inspiring people to explore, enhance, and protect this critical natural resource. Over the past 20+ years, CWC has educated thousands of students, trained thousands of volunteers to preserve the natural resources along California’s Central Coast, and functioned as local experts in watershed protection and river restoration. CWC and partners have existing relationships with the local Latinx and Chinese-American communities and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

East Palo Alto Community Archive **\$169,900**
East Palo Alto Community Heroes and Legends **Bay**

The proposed project will tell the stories of grassroots community leaders from the predominantly Black, Latinx, and Pacific Islander communities who built solidarity and advocated for social change and community resources to facilitate East Palo Alto’s establishment as a city in 1983. The project will highlight different forms of community wealth that have contributed to the culture and heritage of East Palo Alto despite the systemic injustices and racist practices the residents experienced over their recent history. The community will be engaged in selecting and curating the stories and designing the installations at Cooley Landing Park. Major components of the project include the development of a community participatory design plan and process, the outcome of art and critical storytelling content, the design and fabrication of the physical installations, and the installation and community launch event.

Site Description: The project will take place at Cooley Landing Park, a small open space located on the peninsula in the City of East Palo Alto. The park was a landfill from 1930-1960, then used for boat building until 1998, when Peninsula Open Space Trust purchased the area and transferred it to the city in 2006. The city, in partnership with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, conducted an environmental clean-up, built a trail connecting to the San Francisco Bay Trail, developed public amenities, and, in 2015, made an education center. The park has been the site of many community-led restoration projects since its establishment in 2012. It is the ideal location to connect and share community voices outdoors. The Community Archive is not the landowner; however, they have received a letter of support from the City of East Palo Alto, which owns and operates the park and the education center. The installations are planned to occur on the shoreline side of the education center in an already paved area. Due to its proximity to the education center and the Bay Trail, this is an ideal area for all park visitors to learn about the community.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: The East Palo Alto Community Archive (EPACA), a community-established non-profit organization, aims to promote and preserve the history of East Palo Alto and its diverse communities amidst gentrification fueled by the wealthy tech industry. Their mission is to collect, share, promote, celebrate, and preserve the unique history of East Palo Alto and its communities. Their staff and board are uniquely assembled to be residents of the City, represent the communities of East Palo Alto, and bring experience from working in other

non-profits. EPACA has an innate and developed capacity to authentically represent historically excluded communities. EPACA has implemented multiple forms of community engagement, such as community surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews, to ensure that residents played an integral role in developing solutions to preserve their history. EPACA has experience working with grants and has a financial tracking system in place.

**Ink People Center for the Arts
Stories of Wigi**

**\$98,000
North Coast**

The proposed project will tell the stories of Wigi (the name of Humboldt Bay in the Wiyot people’s language) in the City of Eureka, consisting of a story collection and exhibits of the stories, a mapping and book project, a “Stories of Wigi” festival and performance, and fabrication of interpretive signage. The project’s first component will consist of interviewing, recording, and archiving stories of diverse people with accompanying exhibits in the Brenda Tuxford Gallery and Da Gou Rou Louwi’ Cultural Center and a listening station installed at the Eureka Visitors Center. This project will include robust engagement through community meetings, storytelling gatherings, and Spanish language outreach. The Mapping and Book Project component will support artists and culture bearers to create a book and a series of interactive maps. The book will feature the work of contributing visual artists responding to the “Stories of Wigi” theme. The maps will be available for locals and tourists, with Spanish language and children’s maps also available. These resources will be publicly accessible via QR codes on signage along the Eureka waterfront. The proposed project’s third component consists of organizing and holding the Stories of Wigi Festival, which will feature an original performance created and performed as part of a celebratory festival. Community members will be involved in creating the show and will be part of the culminating piece. In addition, the proposed project will include placing signs sharing information and images collected and created through the storytelling and mapping phases. The signs will be placed at the Wiyot Tribe’s Da Gou Rou Louwi Cultural Center, along the Eureka boardwalk, and at Halvorsen Park. QR codes will link to the recordings, maps, and other materials from earlier project phases.

Site Description: Specific project sites where proposed project activities will occur include the Eureka Waterfront Trail, Halvorsen Park, the Da Gou Rou Louwi’ Cultural Center, Halvorsen Park, Eureka Visitor Center, and the Brenda Tuxford Gallery, all located in the City of Eureka.

The Eureka Waterfront Trail is a 6.3-mile trail along the shores of Wigi, offering pedestrians and cyclists expansive views of Wigi and Tuluwat Island, this project's geographic and spiritual center. Interpretive signs in Soulatluk (the Wiyot language) referencing local landmarks and places will be installed along the waterfront trail owned and managed by the City of Eureka. The Eureka Waterfront Trail is now included as part of the Great Redwood Trail, a 320-mile rail-to-trail project connecting San Francisco and Humboldt Bays. The only coastal portion of the trail is in the Eureka area, along Wigi.

Halvorsen Park, a 3.5-acre park on Eureka’s waterfront, is ideal for outdoor concerts, festivals, and community events. Bounded by Wigi, the Eureka Waterfront Trail, and Waterfront Drive, this open space equipped with electricity and potable water provides panoramic views of Wigi, birds, and aquatic wildlife. As the Stories of Wigi Festival site, the park will host a costumed

parade and original musical and theatrical performances incorporating community members' diverse stories and histories. Halvorsen Park is owned and managed by the City of Eureka.

The Da Gou Rou Louwi' Cultural Center, owned and managed by the Wiyot Tribe, celebrates the history and achievements of the indigenous Wiyot community. It promotes research and education dedicated to Wiyot culture and the Soulatluk language. Marnie Atkins of the Wiyot Tribe and Lynnika Butler, the tribe's linguist, will act in consultancy roles, providing insight into Wiyot culture and the Soulatluk language.

Eureka Visitors Center is located near the waterfront and is a resource destination for visitors and locals looking to discover experiences in the City. The Center is also home to the Eureka Main Street office and the City's Economic Development team and serves as a central hub for City events and community projects. It also boasts a reference library, where travelers can learn about the area through unique historical, architectural, and storytelling lenses. For locals, the Visitors Center is often a central hub for news about ongoing events and community projects and programs.

The Brenda Tuxford Gallery is an exhibition space and has welcomed work by emerging and local artists in Eureka since 1982. The gallery will be used to host a multimedia art exhibition documenting the phases of the proposed project and showcasing audio recordings of stories by community members collected in earlier stages. Brenda Tuxford Gallery is located near the waterfront in Eureka, in the same location as the Humboldt County Visitors' Bureau, which owns the space. Ink People Center for the Arts staff manages it.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: Founded in 1979, Ink People Center for the Arts (IPCA) has decades of experience amplifying the voices of communities within Humboldt County's remote and rural areas, many of which fall within the lowest quartile of the California Healthy Places Index. IPCA provides administrative support, professional development, public relations logistical support, and financial tracking services for nearly 100 unique arts and culture initiatives that are also fiscally sponsored by the organization. IPCA has directly connected artists, culture bearers, and community organizers to community health and wellbeing resources. IPCA's programming successes demonstrate their financial capacity to manage grants made at the state and national level effectively. Within the past five years, IPCA received funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and multiple grants from the California Arts Council. IPCA has experience in regranteeing activities and as a fiscal receiver.

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
Where Land Meets Water

\$63,636
South Coast

The proposed project will support Tongva language and cultural revitalization by facilitating the Tongva people's return to the land at the White Point Nature Preserve and documenting the stories of their experiences and perceptions. The project will record an audio tour through the coastal native plant garden surrounding the White Point Nature Education Center. The audio tour will offer essential insights into the plants and people who originate here. The project includes installing wayfinding plant signage that will include Tongva language plant names, providing a springboard for understanding Tongva perceptions of land as interpreted through

the language. Each sign will link to an audio file that provides the pronunciation of the Tongva language plant name and will include an introduction to the plant by a Tongva community member. These narratives will focus on personal experience, relationships, and connections with the plants described, echoing a contemporary storyline of a thriving and resilient community practicing their culture on their ancestral lands. These audio pieces will be accessible through two methods. QR codes allow visitors to access this tour easily through mobile digital devices. For school groups and other visitors who may not have access through personal digital devices, a second option will be available through SensoryPEN® audio wands that can be checked out for free from the adjacent White Point Nature Education Center. These audio wands will play the audio files when touched by targets installed on the signs, allowing an easy way to make this resource available to many school groups and others who visit the space. A wayfinding brochure and a short video piece will additionally support the audio tour. The video segment, providing a springboard for the audio tour, will be available for viewing inside the White Point Nature Education Center, an accessible public facility onsite.

This project will be initiated by an onsite community meeting, in which culture bearers from the Tongva Cultural Collective (TCC) will gather in the White Point Native Plant Demonstration Garden to share ideas, stories, and connections with the local flora. This gathering will be hosted by Palos Verde Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC) staff and will be an opportunity for strengthening collaboration. Building on inspiration from this gathering, the TCC team will work together to select plants and develop related stories to highlight at the different stops in the audio tour. The community will be deeply involved in this process through community volunteer events in the garden hosted by the PVPLC. Signage will be designed under the consultation of the TCC and formatted by the PVPLC before being fabricated and installed. The TCC consultants will also be interviewed for a short video piece that supports the audio tour, and they will be consulted in drafting the language for a wayfinding brochure that helps the tour. The project includes holding a public celebration upon completing installation to honor Tongva community members and their stories.

Site Description: The White Point Nature Preserve features 102 acres of restored coastal sage scrub habitat, hiking, and accessible trails overlooking the ocean and Catalina Island. The Preserve is public land owned by Los Angeles City Parks and Recreation and is managed by the PVPLC. The Preserve provides crucial coastal access within the highly urbanized city. At the center of the Nature Preserve is the White Point Nature Education Center, a Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Facility operated by the PVPLC and open to the general public with free admission. Surrounding the Nature Education Center is a 3.5-acre Native Plant Demonstration Garden, which would be the site of this project and is open to the general public with free access and free parking daily from dawn until dusk.

The White Point Nature Preserve is located on the ancestral lands of the Tongva people, with an Indigenous history going back countless generations. As an essential part of the traditional lands of the Tongva, part of this project's work is to create access to restore the relationship

between the land and people. This location's rare natural coastal habitat makes it the ideal site for this project's objectives. The garden currently hosts a series of aged interpretive panels celebrating Tongva culture and connection to the native plants of the region. However, these signs were installed nearly 20 years ago. They need a fresh, more culturally sensitive perspective that better celebrates the contemporary Tongva community and corrects the damaging perception that this community is only a part of the past.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: PVPLC has successfully preserved over 1,600 acres of open space on the Palos Verdes Peninsula since its founding in 1988. PVPLC has experience leveraging funding from a wide variety of sources. Approximately 30% of the organization's yearly budget is received through government grants and foundations, 30% from individual donors, and 40% from ongoing contracts with cities for whom the PVPLC provides services. The PVPLC receives support from over 3,000 community members who provide financial resources, and another nearly 20,000 volunteer hours contributed to fulfilling its mission. PVPLC manages the coastal White Point Nature Preserve and Nature Education Center, working closely with the City of Los Angeles and the White Point Community Group. Through this project, PVPLC will channel resources and administrative support to the Tongva Cultural Collective, which will be responsible for developing the content of this proposed project.

**Save the Redwoods League
Founders Grove Interpretation**

**\$175,000
North Coast**

The proposed project will focus on re-telling the social, cultural, and historical stories of Founders Grove in Humboldt Redwoods State Park to include previously overlooked or marginalized stewards of the land. New interpretive elements will incorporate the story of women who were key members of the coast redwood conservation movement and the current and ongoing stewardship stories of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria and Eel River Wailaki Tribe. This funding will support the planning, designing, and fabricating of new interpretive exhibits and experiences at a newly constructed comfort station along new and existing trails at Founders Grove. The interpretive elements include kiosks, signs, and interactive displays. The exhibits will highlight a little-known narrative of the coastal redwood conservation movement, including the role of female activists, indigenous relationships to the land, and stewardship. The exhibits will also tell the troubling story of the involvement of early redwoods conservationists in the eugenics movement.

Visitors will experience the grove through the lens of diverse individuals and communities who were instrumental in the history and stewardship of coast redwood protection. These stories and perspectives are essential to creating an inclusive, engaging visitor experience at Founders Grove and reckoning with the complicated, often oppressive history of conservation and outdoor recreation. Given the high visitation to Founders Grove and HRSP, the proposed project has the opportunity to challenge biases of who belongs, enjoys, and stewards the redwoods and the outdoors more broadly for hundreds of thousands of visitors every year,

which in turn supports increased visitation by communities that represent the tremendous diversity of California.

Site Description: Founders Grove is located in Humboldt Redwoods State Park just north of the town of Weott and adjacent to Highway 101—right before South Fork Eel River bridge. It is about 5 miles past the Park’s visitors center on Dyerville Loop Road, and the grove is currently dedicated to the protestors that opposed historical logging of the redwoods in the area. The forest is home to the Founders Tree, which was the world’s tallest known tree from 1931-1957, named after Save the Redwood Leagues’ Founders. The forest is an extensive alluvial flat near the intersection of the South Fork of the Eel River and the Eel River. A half-mile trail runs between the Founders Tree and the fallen Dyerville Giant Tree, the tallest tree in the park from 1958-1991. The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is the owner and manager of the site and has agreed with Save the Redwood League (the League) to improve visitor facilities, trails, and interpretive infrastructure at Founders Grove as part of the DPR’s Founders Grove Renewal and Restoration project.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: Founded in 1918, the League has protected over 200,000 acres of redwood forests and 66 redwood parks and reserves. The League has an experienced team with leadership, land protection, legal, marketing/communications, philanthropy, and scientists, all working together to save California’s redwoods and giant sequoias. It has a robust finance, legal, and grants team to manage grant financial needs and cash flow. The League has experience working with State agencies and is familiar with the standards and requirements of State grants.

The League has a dedicated engagement team committed to strengthening and maintaining relationships with historically excluded communities. The team is working towards building strong relationships with members of local Latinx, Black, and Asian communities. In conjunction with DPR, the League continuously creates and strengthens its relationships with Indigenous and Tribal partners. For example, Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria and the Eel River Wailaki Tribe will be core partners of the interpretation team, providing guidance, knowledge, and content for developing new interpretive infrastructure.

Un Mar de Colores

\$28,200

Encinitas Mural: A Wave of Hope

South Coast

Un Mar de Colores will plan and design an interactive mural to represent the Latinx community recreating and surfing along the scenic Pacific Coast Highway in Encinitas. Un Mar de Colores is a grantee of the Conservancy’s Explore the Coast program, providing BIPOC students with outdoor recreational opportunities. Encinitas is a location where Un Mar de Colores brings students to surf. Currently, students do not feel represented in coastal North County San Diego from Oceanside to Del Mar. This mural will empower students and the public to culturally associate the Latinx community with this stretch of the coast. The Ambrosio family has agreed to host the mural outside their Mexican-owned and family-operated organic grocery store. The

mural will also incorporate the Ambrosio family story, who immigrated from Oaxaca and worked hard to acquire their store. The mural will tell a story highlighting the hard work of immigrant families and the joy of the Latinx community in surfing. Throughout this endeavor, Un Mar de Colores will work closely with the Ambrosio family and the community to ensure that the mural accurately and respectfully represents Latinx heritage and culture. The community will be engaged through meetings, online and in person. Residents, including students and the families from Un Mar de Colores, will actively shape the mural's narrative and themes, making them feel an integral part of the project. Un Mar de Colores will also hire a collaborating professional muralist to assist the community and family with the mural art development process. Engaging social media videos will document the installation process to complement the mural's visual storytelling to amplify a broader story. These videos will provide behind-the-scenes insights, showcase the community's involvement, and capture the essence of the Latinx representation celebrated in the artwork. Overall, the mural will be a symbol to empower Brown and Black people to recreate on the coast in Encinitas.

Site Description: The mural will be at Just Peachy Market, along the Pacific Coast Highway at 1354 N Coast Hwy 101 in Encinitas. It is a popular Mexican-owned grocery store. The site is a few blocks from Leucadia State Beach.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: Un Mar de Colores is a non-profit established in 2020 to empower BIPOC students and their families to connect to the ocean in San Diego County. This organization was founded by a first-generation Mexican American and has the unique capacity to represent historically marginalized communities authentically. The staff is 66% Latinx, which provides a deep understanding and connection to the communities served. Un Mar de Colores has experience managing state grants. As mentioned in the project description, the proposed grantee is a Coastal Conservancy Explore the Coast recipient and is successfully executing the grant.

Watsonville Wetlands Watch	\$169,900
Watsonville Nature Center/Centro de Naturaleza Community Mural	North Coast

Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW) will engage the community of Watsonville to design, implement, and install a mosaic mural and path borders for the new Watsonville Nature Center in Watsonville, Santa Cruz County. Through workshops in consultation with representatives from California Native American tribal groups (such as the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council / The Confederation of Ohlone People and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band), local organizations representing ethnic groups of color that served as agricultural workers in the past, and community members including local farm workers and youth, WWW will collect input for stories of human and natural migrations and environmental stewardship of the Pajaro Valley and wetlands. A local BIPOC artist will then design the mural using community input. WWW will partner with Watsonville Brillante, a local arts and empowerment non-profit, to lead community volunteers in fabricating and installing the mural on the Nature Center and path borders. The story of the mural will demonstrate the environmental stewardship and

leadership of youth and people of color in the community and invite community members of all backgrounds and ages to engage in community-centered restoration, conservation, and action for climate resiliency at the center, in the surrounding wetlands, and throughout the Pajaro Valley. The mosaic-bordered path will lead from the Nature Center to a nearby wetlands trail system, extending the theme of migrations and stewardship into that space.

Site Description: The new Watsonville Nature Center/Centro de Naturaleza (Center) will be the project site. WWW and the City of Watsonville Department of Public Works & Utilities have partnered to create a new facility for the Center, an accessible, family-friendly, bilingual, and welcoming space where community members of all ages have learned about local wetlands and habitats and environmental conservation and participated in guided nature walks since 2004. The new Center will have a broad conservation mission, including wetlands education, climate action, sustainability, and emergency preparedness education, and will feature bilingual and culturally relevant educational exhibits. Centrally located in the City of Watsonville’s Ramsay Park, Watsonville’s largest and most visited public park, the Center will serve as a hub for local environmental conservation work and volunteer stewardship programs and a gateway to the surrounding and growing 9+ mile recreational trail system that circumnavigates the Watsonville wetlands. The mural will be installed on one wall of the new Center, and the border will go along a path leading to a nearby wetlands trail system. The Center is owned by the City of Watsonville and co-managed by the City and WWW under a Memorandum of Understanding that the City Council adopted in April of 2023.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: WWW has served the community of Watsonville since 1991 and has two decades of experience operating successful, bilingual, audience-driven programming. They have long-standing relationships with the community and with the City of Watsonville. WWW has successfully managed previous grants from the Conservancy. For this project, they will partner with the City of Watsonville as the landowner and with Watsonville Brillante, a local community arts and empowerment non-profit organization that seeks out local artists to assist in the design of local community-based public artwork and facilitates community builds for the fabrication of permanent public art.

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. The 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. The project is a good investment of state resources.**

This grant program provides essential benefits to the diverse population of Californians. The projects aim to make outdoor spaces and interpretive centers feel welcoming and inclusive for all Californians by documenting and sharing the histories and stories of underrepresented communities. As an extension of the Conservancy's Explore the Coast (ETC) program, this effort is intended to make the outdoors more welcoming to people and communities that face barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. These projects help the Conservancy achieve public access goals and goals of its Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines.

There is a movement across State agencies to fund community-based organizations and support the efforts that communities decide are important to them. The broad interest in Coastal Stories funding shows that communities are eager to share their stories. The Conservancy can build community capacity and meaningful partnerships by supporting these projects. Additionally, the diverse stories add perspective to what outdoor recreation looks like to different communities, and more Californians will be able to see themselves reflected in these stories.

3. The 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 with the project area.

Six of the eight Coastal Stories projects being proposed for funding include tribal representation in the stories: (1) The Tribal Marine Stewardship Network is a collaboration of four tribes to share their stories; (2) The Palos Verdes Peninsula Conservancy will work with various Tongva Tribal Nations and Tribal members to document their stories and experiences on the land; (3) Save the Redwoods League will include current and ongoing stewardship stories of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria and Eel River Wailaki Tribe; (4) The Coast Watershed Council collaborated with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to incorporate Tribal representation on the mural planned on the San Lorenzo River; (5) Watsonville Wetland Watch will design murals including the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council / The Confederation of Ohlone People and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band; and (6) The Ink People will work with the Wiyot Tribe to tell stories about Wigi (Humboldt Bay). Overall, the proposed projects contribute State funding to self-determined storytelling for tribes. These projects will shed light on the cultural relationships tribes have with the lands across California. They will visibly incorporate indigenous voices, leadership, and perspectives on the California coast.

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

All the projects will continue to deliver benefits over a reasonable period. The projects have plans and parties responsible for maintenance, and signage will be displayed for at least seven years. Grantees will be encouraged to double-print the signage and flip the sign once one side is worn. Project partners will also consider the weathering of posters and graffiti removal protocols for publicly displayed material. Many of the projects are incorporating QR codes, which will link the on-the-ground installations to web-based information. This technology

allows the grantees to update and maintain the web-based information without recreating the signage or public art.

Most projects will create digital files (audio, video, and text) and repositories to permanently document the stories they collect. By creating a story repository with museum or nonprofit partners, this program will ensure that the Coastal stories will be stored and shared beyond each project's installations.

5. The project delivers multiple benefits and a significant positive impact.

The primary purpose of Coastal Stories projects is to create a more inclusive and welcoming outdoor environment for communities that have been historically excluded in California. In addition to enhancing public access to parks and open spaces, these projects deliver multiple benefits. By installing murals, modern and inclusive signage, and other interpretive exhibits, these projects enhance recreational amenities and beautify spaces for all Californians. The projects increase equity and environmental justice by increasing the representation of historically excluded communities' stories. Additionally, at least a portion of all the grants will directly fund underserved community members as either leaders or partners on these projects. The projects will provide job and volunteer opportunities that allow community members to be involved in sharing their stories. Finally, these projects strengthen partnerships between landowning agencies and community-based organizations, individuals, and tribes – partnerships that may manifest in agencies better serving communities and other meaningful projects.

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

All eight proposed projects are community-driven and will actively engage the communities of focus in project design and implementation. Five of the grantees leading the proposed projects are either made up of historically excluded communities or are directly partnered with a historically excluded community to co-create the project. Other projects actively engage communities of focus through interviews, community meetings, and tribal consultations. Collectively, these eight projects engage 20+ existing partner organizations.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,104,736
Others	\$597,372
Project Total	\$1,702,108

The anticipated source of Conservancy funding for the eight proposed projects is the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000 (Proposition 40, Public Resource Code sections 5096.600 et seq.). Proposition 40 appropriates

funds to the Conservancy for: “acquisition, development, rehabilitation, restoration, and protection of land and water resources.” (PRC section 5096.650(b)(1)). Proposition 40 defines “development” as: “improvement, rehabilitation, restoration, enhancement, preservation, protection, and interpretation.” (PRC section 5096.605(c)). It defines “preservation” as: “identification, evaluation, recordation, documentation, interpretation, protection, rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization, development, and reconstruction, or any combination of those activities.” (PRC section 5096.605(j)). Coastal Stories projects preserve and interpret land and water resources because in providing historical and other information regarding the relationships of people to those resources, the projects record, document, and interpret those resources. The proposed projects will create storytelling installations, murals, or interpretive materials representing diverse communities and perspectives historically excluded from narratives of California’s coast and publicly accessible lands.

In making grants pursuant to Proposition 40, the Conservancy must give priority to projects that include a commitment for a matching contribution. Contributions may be in the form of money, property, or services. (PRC section 5096.651). All the proposed projects have a match contribution, and the match contribution was included in the scoring criteria for the grant review process. There will also be documentation of match contribution for all projects in this year’s grant round.

Project partners will provide approximately \$597,372 in matching funds for the 2023-2024 Coastal Stories grants. In addition, they will give roughly \$79,190 of in-kind services from community volunteers, staff, and project partner volunteer time, art material donations, and free site and facility usage via partnerships between organizations.

Unless specifically identified as “Required Match,” the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. Although match funds will be documented for each project, the Conservancy will not consider a failure to provide matching funds to be a breach of the grant. 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 additional funds needed to complete a project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Funding the projects proposed under this authorization is consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. Staff recommends the Conservancy find these projects consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 (Sections 31400 et seq.) regarding establishing a system of public accessways to and along the California coast. Section 31400 states the Legislature’s intent that the Conservancy play a principal role in implementing a system of public accessways to and along the state’s coastline, including San Francisco Bay.

All of the proposed projects listed in this staff recommendation will be funded by the Conservancy to implement public access objectives and to provide enhancements to public accessways that will make them more inclusive of diverse communities. The amount of the funding supplied was determined by the total amount of funding available for the Coastal Stories grant program, the fiscal resources of the applicant, the urgency of the project relative to other eligible projects, and the application of factors described in the solicitation. Section 31400.3 authorizes the Conservancy to provide such assistance as is required to aid public agencies and nonprofit organizations in establishing a system of public coastal accessways and related functions necessary to meet the objectives of this division.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN:

The eight projects proposed for funding assist the Conservancy in meeting several of its Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. Relevant Goals and Objectives are listed below, along with the names of the proposed projects that meet each goal.

Consistent with **Goal 1.1 Commit Funding to Benefit Systematically Excluded Communities**, all eight proposed projects commit funding to projects that benefit systematically excluded communities. Proposed projects are led by people from systemically excluded communities, include engagement with and participation by people from systemically excluded communities, reduce barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast for members of the community, and elevate voices from the community by incorporating culturally relevant interpretative storytelling elements or artistic styles in project design and educational materials.

Consistent with **Goal 1.3, Support Meaningful Engagement by Systematically Excluded Communities**, all eight proposed projects include meaningful engagement processes with storytellers and the intended audiences that the stories are meant to reach and work with the public in co-visioning processes to develop the stories that best reflect community priorities.

Consistent with **Goal 2.2 Coastal Stories Program**, all eight proposed projects include activities that plan, develop, and implement storytelling installations or materials (such as murals, signage, monuments, or guides) that represent communities and voices that have been historically excluded from accounts of California's coast and publicly accessible lands.

Consistent with **Goal 2.5, Recreation Facilities & Amenities**, the five proposed projects below support educational and interpretive facilities and signage, including multi-lingual signage that enables people to enjoy natural, cultural, and historical resources.

- East Palo Alto Community Heroes and Legends Project (East Palo Alto Community Archive)
- Where Land Meets Water (Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy)
- Founders Grove Interpretation (Save the Redwoods League)
- Stories of Wigi (The Ink People)

- Watsonville Nature Center/Centro de Naturaleza Community Mural: Migrations (Watsonville Wetlands Watch)

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

Conservancy staff reviewed the eight proposed projects for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and its implementing regulations (14 California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 et seq). All of the proposed projects are categorically exempt under CEQA. Applicable CEQA exemptions are listed below.

14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15301 (Existing Facilities): All eight proposed projects are categorically exempt under 14 CCR Section 15301, which exempts operation, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities or topographic features, including pedestrian trails (Section 15301(c)) and wildlife areas and stream channels to protect fish and wildlife resources (Section 15301(i)).

14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15311 (Accessory Structures): The six proposed projects below are, in addition, also categorically exempt under 14 CCR Section 15311, which exempts the construction or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including on-premises signs (Section 15311(a)).

- San Lorenzo River Public Art Interpretation Project (Coastal Watershed Council)
- East Palo Alto Community Heroes and Legends Project (East Palo Alto Community Archive)
- Where Land Meets Water (Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy)
- Encinitas Mural: A Wave of Hope (Un Mar de Colores)
- Watsonville Nature Center/Centro de Naturaleza Community Mural: Migrations (Watsonville Wetlands Watch)
- Stories of Wigi (Ink People Center for the Arts)

Upon approval, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Exemptions for each project.