

EXPLORE THE COAST

Competitive Grants Program
Guidelines and Application Forms

Funded In Part Through: The Whale Tail® License Plate Program



A Project Of:



The California Coastal Conservancy
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EXPLORE THE COAST

Introduction

The California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) is soliciting applications from public agencies and nonprofit organizations for grants for projects that facilitate and enhance the public's opportunities to "Explore the Coast." The purpose of this grant program is to support activities that allow more people to explore California's spectacular coast and/or enhance a visitor's experience. This includes projects that enhance visitors' ability to learn about natural, recreational, cultural and historic resources of the California and San Francisco Bay shorelines. Explore the Coast grants will support a wide range of activities including communication and outreach, economic development related to coastal tourism, and development of interpretive information and/or education materials. In general, this grant program prioritizes non-capital improvement projects that are generally not eligible for bond funding.

A total of \$1,000,000 is available for awards through this competitive grant program. There is no established minimum grant amount; the anticipated maximum grant amount will not exceed \$50,000. The Conservancy will base the size of the award on each project's needs, its overall benefits, and on the extent of competing demands for funds. Projects will be ranked according to established criteria (see page 4). The highest ranking will be assigned to projects that meet one or more of the following priorities:

- ◆ Enhances a visitors' coastal experience in a way that does not currently exist;
- ◆ Increases the number of people visiting the coast;
- ◆ Provides a valuable recreational, environmental, cultural or historic learning experience;
- ◆ Serves a large number of people within the context of the population density of the surrounding area;
- ◆ Serves lower-income or other underserved populations;
- ◆ Maximizes barrier-free access for persons with disabilities; and/or
- ◆ Increases stewardship of coastal resources.

Projects selected for grant funding must be consistent with the Conservancy's "*Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines*" (See the Conservancy's Grant Application Instructions, Exhibit A, <http://scc.ca.gov/applying-for-grants-and-assistance/forms/>), the goals and objectives of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan 2013-2018, (see the Conservancy's Grant Application Instructions, Exhibit B), and the funding source (see page 3).

Background

The California Coastal Conservancy is a non-regulatory state agency that works to preserve, improve, and restore public access, natural resources and agricultural lands along the Pacific coast and the San Francisco Bay shoreline and its adjacent counties. The Conservancy's work complements the work of the California Coastal Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) by undertaking projects and working with public agencies and non-governmental organizations to accomplish these goals.

Increasing public access to California's coast is a fundamental goal of the Coastal Act, and a core component of the Conservancy's work. The Conservancy has funded the construction of hundreds of new trails, trailheads and other features (beach stairways, bathrooms, overlooks, etc). With its partners, the Conservancy is working to complete the California Coastal Trail, a braided network of trails extending 1200 miles from Oregon to Mexico. Similarly, increasing public access to the San Francisco Bay shoreline is a core mandate of BCDC, and among the Conservancy's San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program goals is to improve public access to, within and around the bay through construction and operation of regional trail systems including the San Francisco Bay Trail. With the Explore the Coast program, the Conservancy is targeting projects that will bring more people to the coast and San Francisco Bay shoreline and/or enhance the experience of those visiting them.

Grant funding will come from two non-bond fund sources: 1) the California Environmental License Plate Fund, which derives from sales of the Whale Tail® License Plate, an official "specialty" license plate issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles for cars registered in California; and 2) the Coastal Access Account, which is derived from permit fees from coastal development permits issued by the California Coastal Commission. The Whale Tail funds may be granted to projects throughout the coast and bay, but the Coastal Access Account funds must be used along the coast only, not in the San Francisco Bay. For more information on the funding sources, see Vehicle Code § 5067 and Public Resources Code § 30620.2.

Grant Application Procedure

Eligible Applicants: Public agencies and certain nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding. To be eligible, a nonprofit organization must qualify under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and its articles of incorporation must demonstrate that the organization's purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, the Coastal Conservancy's enabling legislation.

Eligible Project Locations: Projects must be located along the coast of California (within the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, or San Diego) or along the San Francisco Bay shoreline (within the counties of Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, or San Francisco).

Eligible Projects: Eligible projects include a wide range of programs and activities that will help to bring more people to the coast and/or enhance their experience at the coast in a manner consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. Below is a list of some examples of types of eligible projects; this is not an exhaustive list:

- Development of interpretive material, including web-based information and docent programs, to provide users with historical, cultural, biological, and other information related to segments of the Coastal Trail, Bay Trail or other coastal or bay shoreline access points.
- Collaboration with existing businesses and/or development of micro-businesses to serve users of the Coastal Trail, Bay Trail and other shoreline amenities. Potential services include equipment rentals, establishment of inn to inn hiking opportunities, and others.
- Outreach events that raise public awareness of access opportunities.

- Provision of transportation to bring low-income or other underserved populations to the coast or bay shoreline to take part in educational or interpretive programs.
- Programs that promote the use of public transit to access the coast or bay shoreline.
- Development of programs or physical improvements that maximize barrier-free access to the coast or bay shoreline for persons with disabilities. Examples include beach wheelchairs, improved paths of travel, improved wayfinding for persons with physical challenges, or guided programs.
- Development of programs for volunteer stewardship of Coastal Trail or Bay Trail segments or other coastal or bay shoreline access points and habitats.
- Festivals to promote recreational uses of waterfront areas, harbors, piers, boating facilities and trails.
- Programs or projects that promote working waterfronts (must include a public element, e.g., establishment of direct-to-consumer fish markets).

Prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss their projects with Conservancy staff (from the region in which their project is located, see contacts below) prior to submitting applications.

Application Form: The Conservancy's grant application form can be downloaded from the Conservancy's website at <http://scc.ca.gov/applying-for-grants-and-assistance/forms/>. Applications for \$10,000 or less need only complete Part A of the grant application.

Application Submittal: Applications should be submitted via email to Dick Wayman, dwayman@scc.ca.gov. Refer to the **Applying for Grants** section of the Conservancy's Grant Application Instructions for additional information on submitting your grant proposal.

Submission Dates: Proposals received by **May 10, 2013** will be evaluated and ranked by a committee of Conservancy staff.

Questions: Questions about the application process and potential projects may be directed to:

Karyn Gear, North Coast Program Manager (Del Norte to Coastal Marin), 510-286-4171 or kgear@scc.ca.gov

Amy Hutzel, SF Bay Area Conservancy Program Manager (San Francisco and SF Bay Shoreline), 510-286-4180 or ahutzel@scc.ca.gov

Trish Chapman, Central Coast Program Manager (Coastal San Mateo to Santa Barbara), 510-286-0749, tchapman@scc.ca.gov

Joan Cardellino, South Coast Program Manager (Ventura to San Diego), 510-286-4093, jcard@scc.ca.gov

Project Selection Criteria and Process

Project Review: Conservancy staff will review, evaluate and rank the applications based on the project's relative significance and how well it meets the Selection Criteria stated below. Applicants may be contacted to provide additional information during the review process. Conservancy staff may seek assistance in evaluating the proposals from individuals and/or

technical experts with pertinent expertise from other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and other entities. Applicants who submit proposals by the May 10th deadline can anticipate being notified of their projects' ranking by May 31st.

Selection Criteria: High priority projects are those that best meet each of the following criteria:

- ◆ Proposed project meets at least one of the identified Explore the Coast priorities;
- ◆ Project is consistent with the Conservancy's "*Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines*" (Exhibit A, Conservancy Grant Application Instructions <http://scc.ca.gov/applying-for-grants-and-assistance/forms/>);
- ◆ Fills a documented and clearly defined need (project can address one very high substantiated need, or multiple moderate needs);
- ◆ Project description is clear and concise;
- ◆ All other project funding is available; and
- ◆ Project is ready to proceed in a timely manner.

Conservancy Board Approval: Projects selected for funding are subject to the Coastal Conservancy Board approval of a staff recommendation. Project funding will not be available until after approval of the grant award by the Conservancy Board at a noticed public meeting, and upon the execution of a funding agreement between the Conservancy and the grantee. The earliest possible Board meeting at which projects will be considered is October 3, 2013. Applicants are required to provide staff with all pertinent information in a timely manner to ensure Board consideration.

For additional detail on the process once a Conservancy grant has been awarded, please see Exhibit D of the Conservancy's Grant Application Instructions (<http://scc.ca.gov/applying-for-grants-and-assistance/forms/>, "*Typical Sequence of Activities for Grant Funding from Application through Project Completion*").