

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
November 9, 2006

CALIFORNIA COASTAL AND MARINE MAPPING INITIATIVE - AUGMENTATION

File No. 06-097
Project Manager: Marina Cazorla

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,510,000 to the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation to augment the previously authorized California Coastal and Marine Mapping Initiative project, to complete offshore seafloor mapping between Bolinas and Point Arena.

LOCATION: North Coast, in state waters

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection, Ocean Protection Council and Ocean Program

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Maps of areas to be mapped

Exhibit 2: February 3, 2006 Staff Recommendation

Exhibit 3: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Section 31220 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an additional amount not to exceed one million five hundred and ten thousand dollars (\$1,510,000) to the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation to augment the previously authorized California Coastal and Marine Mapping Initiative project. The additional funds shall be used to acquire data for offshore substrate and marine habitat mapping along the northern Central California Coast between Bolinas and Point Arena.

This authorization is subject to the condition that no funds shall be disbursed until:

1. The Ocean Protection Council has approved the Joint Workplan developed with the Department of Fish and Game for implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act and the

Marine Life Management Act, and the Workplan provides for implementation of the proposed project.

2. The Ocean Protection Council has determined that the proposed project is a high priority for ocean conservation.
3. Thirty days have passed after the Ocean Protection Council approved Joint Workplan has been submitted to the relevant legislative committee.
4. The Executive Officer of the Conservancy has approved a work plan, budget, project schedule, and any contractors to be employed to carry out the project.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project remains consistent with Chapter 5.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Section 31220) regarding integrated coastal and marine resource protection.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation is a private nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy authorize the augmentation of an existing project for mapping the state’s coastal seafloor through an additional grant of \$1,510,000 to the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation (MBSF) for further offshore substrate and marine habitat mapping along the northern Central California Coast. The Conservancy authorized the existing mapping project at its February 3, 2006 meeting. (A copy of the February 3, 2006 Staff Recommendation is attached as Exhibit 2). The existing project involves mapping between Año Nuevo and Bolinas. The proposed augmentation would fund mapping between Bolinas and Point Arena. Together, the regions comprise one of the future Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) regions, the “North Central Coast” study region. One of the many applications of seafloor mapping data is to create marine habitat maps used in marine protected area (MPA) design.

Funding for the project would be provided from a General Fund appropriation to the Conservancy for implementation of the MLPA and the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), pursuant to a plan developed jointly by the Ocean Protection Council and the Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). At its November 28, 2006 meeting in Sacramento, the Ocean Protection Council will consider a Joint Workplan developed by staff to the Conservancy, the Council, and CDFG for implementation of the MLPA and MLMA. Upon approval by the Council, the Joint

Workplan will be submitted to fiscal committees in each house of the Legislature as well as the Joint Legislative Budget Committee for a 30-day review, as required by the terms of this appropriation. The Ocean Protection Council will also consider the proposed project at its November 28th meeting to determine whether it is a high priority for ocean protection. The recommended Conservancy authorization will not proceed unless and until all of these actions have occurred and can only proceed consistent with those actions. (If, as a result of these actions, any substantially significant deviations from the project as described in this recommendation are required, staff will return to the Conservancy as necessary.)

Background

The California Ocean Protection Act (Public Resources Code Sections 35500, et seq.) and subsequent adopted documents of the Ocean Protection Council emphasize that it is state policy to implement ecosystem-based approaches to manage coastal and marine resources using sound science. Implementation of ecosystem-based management strategies requires consideration of interactions between species, their habitats, and human activities. Many of these interactions are not well understood, and significant data and information gaps hinder achievement of effective ecosystem-based management. Statewide, California's resource managers and scientists must often make decisions based on a patchy picture of the habitats that lie offshore.

Accurate statewide mapping of seafloor substrate, marine habitat types, and bathymetry (underwater topography) of California's coastal and nearshore waters is a crucial component necessary to guide multiple ocean management decisions. Designating marine reserves, understanding sediment transport systems, ensuring shipping safety, identifying dredging and dumping sites, regulation of offshore coastal development, and illuminating the dynamics of fisheries and other marine species, are just a few of the applications that would benefit from coastal and marine mapping data and products. Although small sections of the coast, including some adjacent federal waters, have been mapped to varying extents and resolutions, a comprehensive and seamless map of the state's near- and offshore benthic and marine resources does not currently exist.

Implementation of the Mapping Initiative

The previously approved \$1.2 million grant to MBSF funded the acquisition of new mapping data between Año Nuevo and Bolinas, through various collection techniques including side-scan sonar, multi-beam, and LiDAR, and creation of processed data and map products for resource managers (Exhibit 2). Through a competitive Request for Proposals, MBSF in cooperation with the National Marine Sanctuary Program solicited collaborative, multi-institution proposals to collect, process, and interpret mapping data in the project area. The winning proposal was a joint proposal from CSUMB and Fugro Pelagos for fieldwork, and Moss Landing Marine Lab and the U.S. Geological Survey for data interpretation and data products.

Project Description for Proposed Augmentation

The proposed additional funding would be used by MBSF to augment its existing contract with CSUMB and subcontractors Fugro Pelagos, Moss Landing Marine Lab and the U.S. Geological Survey, in order to expand the existing project's geographic scope northward to include seafloor mapping between Bolinas and Point Arena. Mapping would focus on mapping the "offshore" area of state waters between these geographic locations, between the 20-meter water depth and 3 nautical miles, the limit of state waters. Fieldwork would take place during winter 06/07 using a

large survey vessel, the R/V Davidson. The project would include groundtruthing of multibeam mapping data, and creation of Tier 1, 2 and 2.5 data products such as benthic habitat maps for use by resource managers, including CDFG and MLPA staff.

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation (MBSF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, whose mission is to advance the understanding and protection of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and other coastal and ocean resources in California. MBSF oversees the Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN) which monitors and reports on the health of the ocean ecosystem; promotes ocean conservation education for underserved communities; promotes water quality; supports Marine Protected Area efforts; and serves as fiscal sponsor for a variety of federal and state grants and contracts. MBSF is experienced at managing large contracts and grants, and offers a reasonable overhead of 10 percent for administration.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Funding Sources:

Funding Sources – Existing Project:

Ocean Protection Council	\$1,200,000
National Marine Sanctuary Prog. In-Kind Contribution (est.)	<u>\$ 550,000</u>

Total Existing Project **\$1,750,000**

Funding Sources – Expanded Project:

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,510,000
California Department of Fish and Game	<u>\$1,000,000</u>

Total Expanded Project **\$2,510,000**

TOTAL PROJECT COST **\$4,260,000**

For the proposed augmentation to undertake the expanded project, staff anticipates using \$1,510,000 of the total of eight million dollars appropriated from the General Fund to the Conservancy in fiscal year 2006/2007 for projects implementing a workplan jointly developed by the Ocean Protection Council and the California Department of Fish and Game to implement the Marine Life Protection Act and the Marine Life Management Act. The appropriation requires the workplan to be submitted to the Legislature at least thirty days prior to any expenditure of these funds. At its next scheduled meeting on November 28th, the Council will consider approval of the workplan and a determination of whether the proposed project is a high priority for ocean conservation and use of this funding source. The workplan will be submitted to the Legislature immediately following Council approval.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project, as augmented, would continue to be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 5.5 (Section 31220) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, which allows the Conservancy to carry out projects that protect and/or restore marine habitat and promote integrated coastal and marine resources protection. Under Section 31220 of the Public Resources Code, the Conservancy may undertake projects that meet any of the objectives specified in subsection (b) of that section. Consistent with Section 31220(b), subsection 5, the proposed project will provide for monitoring of marine protected areas in order to facilitate the protection and enhancement of resources within the coastal zone. In addition, the proposed project is consistent with 31220(b), subsection 10, as it will promote sustainable management through improved knowledge about state marine resources, a major objective of the California Ocean Protection Act.

The Department of Fish and Game has been consulted with regard to this project, as required by Section 31220(b)(5). As also required by Section 31220(c), the project includes a monitoring and evaluation component and is consistent with adopted state and regional watershed planning as described below under "Consistency with Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan." Finally, as required by Section 31220(a), Conservancy staff has consulted with the State Water Resources Control Board in the development of this project in order to ensure consistency with the Clean Beaches Program under Chapter 3 of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN/STATE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN:

The purpose of local coastal watershed management plans and the California Ocean Plan is to prevent water quality degradation and to protect the beneficial uses of coastal waters. Water quality control plans adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board are designed to focus resources on key issues, promote the use of sound science, and promulgate cooperative, collaborative efforts in coastal areas to protect and enhance coastal waters. As a scientific monitoring project that includes coastal waters of California, the proposed project will promote the sustainable use of coastal resources and protection of marine habitat. For the same reasons, the proposed project is also consistent with the policies of the 2001 California Ocean Plan that states "the beneficial uses of the ocean waters of the State that shall be protected include...water contact and non-contact recreation; aesthetic enjoyment; commercial and sport fishing; ...preservation and enhancement of designated Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS); rare and endangered species; marine habitat; (and) fish migration."

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objectives A & B**, the proposed project will benefit coastal marine resources through the mapping of coastal and marine substrate and habitat in California's central coast, which will promote sustainable use and management of coastal and marine resources.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project, as augmented, remains consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy’s statutory programs and purposes:** See the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” section above.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The proposed project is supported by the Department of Fish and Game and the MLPA Initiative (Exhibit 3). In addition, letters of support for the original project were submitted by the National Marine Sanctuary Program, the California Coastal National Monument, the National MPA Center, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Point Reyes National Seashore, Seagrant, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Coastal Commission (Exhibit 2).
4. **Location:** Statewide, within the coastal zone and state waters off the Central Coast.
5. **Need:** There are currently no other major funders or sources of funding available for this type of project, nor does the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation have the funding to complete this mapping effort without Conservancy funding.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The citizens of California throughout the state will benefit from this project through more informed, sustainable management of coastal and marine resources that will result from mapping of coastal and marine resources.

Additional Criteria

7. **Resolution of more than one issue:** Marine substrate and habitat mapping will support a variety of needs: marine protected areas management, fisheries management, offshore development regulation, protection of rare and endangered species, and improved navigation.
8. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
9. **Readiness:** The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation and its contractors are ready to commence fieldwork and seafloor mapping immediately upon approval of the proposed project.
10. **Innovation:** The proposed project will promote technologically innovative mapping techniques.
11. **Cooperation:** The proposed project will involve the cooperation of state and federal agencies, academic institutions, and researchers.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations, Section 15306 (data collection, research and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource). The proposed project will not result in disturbance to the marine environment or its wildlife. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval.