

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

May 24, 2007

**NORTH CENTRAL COAST SOCIOECONOMIC DATA COLLECTION**

File No. 06-109-03

Project Manager: Christine Blackburn

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Consideration and possible Conservancy authorization to disburse to Ecotrust up to \$200,000 of funds previously authorized to implement the Ocean Protection Council Department/Fish and Game joint work plan. These funds will be used consistent with the Marine Life Protection Act to collect socioeconomic data in the north central coast study region.

**LOCATION:** North central coast study region, five miles north of Point Arena to Pigeon Point

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [January 18, 2007 staff recommendation and OPC-DFG work plan](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

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

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement to Ecotrust of an amount not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) of funds previously authorized to implement the Ocean Protection Council–Department of Fish and Game joint work plan. These funds will be used to collect socioeconomic data in the north central coast study region of the Marine Life Protection Act.”

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 Ecotrust is a nonprofit organization existing under the provisions of U.S. Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the

Public Resources Code.”

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy authorize the disbursement of up to \$200,000 to Ecotrust of funds previously authorized to implement the Ocean Protection Council (OPC)–Department of Fish and Game (DFG) joint work plan. These funds will be used to collect socioeconomic data in the north central coast study region of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA).

In January 2007, the Coastal Conservancy authorized the disbursement of up to \$4,215,000 for data collection, analysis, monitoring, and other actions to implement the Marine Life Protection Act and Marine Life Management Act as specified in the OPC–DFG joint work plan. It was anticipated at that time that portions of the work plan would be implemented by means of grants to nonprofit organization or other entities having an interest in, and the ability to execute, relevant work plan tasks. The original Conservancy staff recommendation and joint work plan are attached as Exhibit 1.

Component A8 of this work plan calls for preliminary socioeconomic data collection for the MLPA process in the next study region so that these data may be taken into account while planning the next regional network. On December 21, 2006, the north central coast (five miles north of Point Arena to Pigeon Point) was named as the next region. In February, the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task was appointed and the regional stakeholder process was initiated, led by the MLPA Initiative staff. Socioeconomic data are needed for the fall portion of the stakeholder process when groups will begin to analyze different options for marine protected areas (MPAs) in the region.

**Project Details:**

Ecotrust collected socioeconomic data in the first MLPA study region—the central coast—by compiling and mapping expert knowledge from fishermen to create a comprehensive picture of commercial fishing use patterns in the region. Numerous reviews of the previous Ecotrust project were conducted. These reviews concluded that the work performed by Ecotrust constituted an innovative and vital contribution to the understanding of fisheries and to the engagement of fishermen in participatory research. However, there were also several critiques of the methods used and suggestions for improving the study if the MLPA process proceeded. The proposed project incorporates both suggestions made by these reviewers and additional lessons learned from the Ecotrust Central Coast project.

The project will use a sampling design similar to the one implemented in the Central Coast process; data will again be collected through interviews with fishermen using Oceanmap, a GIS-based data system. Once the data has been collected and reviewed by an Ecotrust analyst, interviewees will be able to verify the accuracy of the information they provided using a secure internet-based application. Ecotrust will design and create this application in order to allow participants to validate their information without the need for group meetings, which proved costly and time intensive in the Central Coast project. After each fisherman reviews and verifies his or her data, composite datasets of the fishing grounds will be created for each fishery to preserve the confidentiality of individual fishing areas. The information and maps will then be analyzed and presented such that they can be incorporated into existing decision-support tools

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and databases developed for the MLPA process, affording managers and stakeholders the ability to design and assess the potential socioeconomic effects of MPA network alternatives.

Major components of proposed project include:

1. Conducting outreach and education
2. Fine-tuning survey design
3. Field data collection
4. Quality Assurance/Quality Control
5. Analysis and evaluation of the commercial fishing grounds
6. Socioeconomic impact analysis
7. Providing data for use by stakeholders
8. Customizing outputs to the needs identified by:
  - a. MLPA Regional Stakeholder Group
  - b. MLPA Science Advisory Team
  - c. Blue Ribbon Task Force
  - d. MLPA Initiative staff
  - e. Fish and Game Commission
9. Documentation/Dissemination of project methods and results

**Project Timeline:**

Due to the fast pace of MLPA process, Ecotrust has already started work on this project to provide completed products by the desired date. Outreach and education, identification of target interviewees and hiring and training of field staff will run concurrently. Furthermore, development of the analysis and on-line components will also run concurrently with the interview process. Ecotrust estimates three teams of two interviewers in the field can complete the required number of interviews within the designated time frame. If approved, the Conservancy grant will reimburse Ecotrust for work completed to date, as well as going forward.

**Grantee:**

Ecotrust is a conservation and economic development organization that works to strengthen communities and the environment from Alaska to California. They work with native peoples and in the fisheries, forestry, and farming sectors to build a regional economy that is based on social and ecological opportunities. These efforts are predicated on the notion that economic and ecological systems are mutually interdependent. The Ecotrust team conducted a similar study in the previous MLPA region, provided that data to stakeholders and decision makers, and incorporated reviewed and lessons learned from that process into this proposed project. The Ecotrust staff have also continued to improve the computer based tools they will use to present the data to numerous groups, making the data easier to understand and more useful in analyzing alternative MPA package options.

**PROJECT FINANCING:**

Coastal Conservancy	<u>\$200,000</u>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>

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Funding for this grant will be derived from the \$4,215,000 authorization by the Conservancy in January 2007 for the implementation of the MLPA and the Marine Life Management Act. The source of Conservancy funds is a direct appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy in the FY 2006/07 Budget, which reads as follows:

“Of the funds appropriated in this item, \$8,000,000 shall be available for implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act and Marine Life Management Act. These funds shall be expended pursuant to a plan developed jointly by the Ocean Protection Council and the Department of Fish and Game. The plan shall be submitted to the chairpersons of the fiscal committees in each house of the Legislature and the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.”

**OTHER COMPLIANCE :**

As an element of the approve OPC–DFG joint work plan, the project is consistent with the authorities, criteria, and requirements described in the Conservancy staff recommendation of January 18, 2007, attached as Exhibit 1.