

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 20, 2007

BODEGA BAY TRAILS ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT PROJECT

File No. 07-047-01
Project Manager: Deborah Hirst

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Sonoma County Regional Parks Department to complete a programmatic environmental document for the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Plan in Bodega Bay, Sonoma County.

LOCATION: Bodega Bay, Sonoma County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Access

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map: Bodega Bay](#)
 - Exhibit 2: [Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Study Maps](#)
 - Exhibit 3: [Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Study: Conceptual Improvement Plan](#)
 - Exhibit 4: [Photographs of Bodega Bay Resources](#)
 - Exhibit 5: [Letters of Support](#)
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400 et seq. of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to Sonoma County Regional Parks Department ("Sonoma County") to complete a programmatic environmental document for the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Plan for Bodega Bay, Sonoma County, subject to the condition that prior to the disbursement of funds, Sonoma County shall submit for the written approval of the Conservancy’s Executive Officer a work program, budget, and the names of any contractors it intends to employ for 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 authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 9, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. The project will serve greater than local needs.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize the disbursement of up to \$100,000 to Sonoma County Regional Parks Department to complete a programmatic environmental document for the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Plan for Bodega Bay, Sonoma County.

The proposed project is a necessary next step for the implementation of Sonoma County's vision for a safe, multi-use trail off Highway 1 to connect from Salmon Creek, through Sonoma Coast State Park, into Bodega Bay and down onto the spit of Doran Beach Park at the southern edge of this highly-visited coastal town (See map, Exhibit 2). The environmental document will provide necessary California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluation and review of all the related trail projects designed in the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Study's Conceptual Improvement Plan (“Bodega Bay CIP” 2005 attached as Exhibit 3). Site-specific CEQA review will be completed as necessary project by project as the Bodega Bay Conceptual Improvement Plan is implemented over the next five to ten years.

Proposed projects in the Bodega Bay CIP include trail segments connecting Bird Walk Coastal Access Park with Smith Brothers Road along the Bay, constructing two sections of board walk along the edge of the Bay and building trail improvements up Bay Flat Road. The Bay Flat Road segment will address hillside erosion and construct a cantilevered trail up the narrow, one-way road into town. Additional trail segments will provide safe access off Highway One from the center of town north to Sonoma Coast State Beach, the Bodega Dunes Campground and to the community at Salmon Creek (Exhibit 4). Improvements planned along Highway One will provide safe bicycle and pedestrian trail access to the Bodega Bay Community Center and future Community Park locations from Salmon Creek in the north and the edge of Bodega Bay to the south.

Sonoma County operates a network of parks and public access trails throughout the County and hosts over 2 million visitors along its spectacular coast each year. Sonoma County has completed a number of coastal planning and implementation projects with public input and Conservancy support, including the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Study Conceptual Improvement Plan in September 2005 (Bodega Bay CIP) which

identified the sequence of trail projects necessary to complete safe access for bicycles and pedestrians through Bodega Bay, Salmon Creek and Bodega Headlands.

Site Description:

The proposed project covers areas proposed for California Coastal Trail construction through the coastal village of Bodega Bay located in the unincorporated coastal area of western Sonoma County north of the Estero Americano and south of Salmon Creek. Highway One is the main access through Bodega Bay. Extremely narrow, curving sections of the Highway pose serious danger for pedestrians and cyclists. The Bodega Bay CIP identifies a preferred route, as well as alternative routes and additional improvements, to provide bicycle and pedestrian access through a combination of park land, Caltrans right-of-way and potential easement areas.

The California Coastal Trail in Bodega Bay will help link numerous sightseeing and recreational attractions in the area including the Bodega Bay Harbor, Bodega Marine Lab, Sonoma Coast State Beach, Doran Beach and a number of Sonoma County Regional Parks facilities (Exhibit 4). Habitat and natural resources in the area include salt and fresh water marshes, creeks, sand dunes, beaches and shoreline and the wildlife these landscapes support. The site will serve the approximately 1,400 residents living in Bodega Bay and many of the estimated 2 million visitors traveling along the Sonoma Coast each year.

Project History:

Over the course of 2002-2005, the Conservancy supported an extensive outreach and planning process conducted by Sonoma County for the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Study. The resulting Bodega Bay CIP (Exhibit 3) provided a phased plan for access and trail improvements from Salmon Creek to the north of Bodega Bay, down through the coastal town and out to the resources to the south, including Doran Beach.

The primary purpose of the Bodega Bay CIP is to create priorities and designs for a multi-use trail to provide a safe alternative for transit off Highway 1. The urgency of this need continues to be shown with vehicle-related fatalities occurring along this heavily traveled and treacherously windy, narrow stretch of Highway 1 (see Exhibit 3, p. 7). The Bodega Bay trail segments will together form an important part of the California Coastal Trail where only 2.3 miles of coast (and 9 miles by road) remain as a gap between southern Sonoma County and northern Marin County.

The proposed project was developed by Sonoma Parks as a next step in the process of implementing the appropriate programmatic review of the segments as a whole. In addition to the programmatic environmental document, site-by-site environmental reviews will be completed prior to the implementation of individual trail segment projects from the Bodega Bay CIP wherever necessary.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$100,000
Sonoma County	\$107,000
Coastal Impact Assistance Program	<u>\$ 43,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$250,000

Conservancy funds for this project are expected to derive from the Conservancy’s FY2002/03 appropriation from Proposition 40 (the “Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Air and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2002”). The proposed project serves to assist in the development of land-based public access consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21. The project is supported by a commitment by Sonoma County to provide substantial matching funds. The proposed project will complete the necessary California Environmental Quality Act review for the series of trail segments designed in the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Study Conceptual Improvement Plan, and enable the sequential construction of trail projects to complete the California Coastal Trail and improve public access through the highly scenic and popular coastal destination of Bodega Bay in Sonoma County. The project is consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation as described below. Proposition 40 also requires the Conservancy to give priority to grant projects with matching funds (Public Resources Code Section 5096.651). The project is supported by a commitment by Sonoma County to provide substantial matching funds toward completion of the project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 9 (Sections 31400 et seq.) of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state’s coastline.

Section 31400.1 of the Public Resources Code authorizes the Conservancy to award a grant to a local public agency to develop and manage lands for public access to and along the coast, so long as the accessway will serve more than local public needs. The proposed project is consistent with this section as the Regional Parks Department is a public agency and the Bodega Bay area is recognized as a destination of regional, national and international interest to millions of people annually.

Pursuant to Section 31400.2, the Conservancy may provide up to the total cost of acquisition of interests in land and the initial development of public accessways by any public agency or nonprofit organization, as provided in Section 31400.1. The proposed project is consistent with this section as project funding will derive from the Conservancy and Sonoma County, for the development of an accessway in the Bodega Bay area. Staff has evaluated the project in light of the total amount of funding available for coastal accessway projects, the fiscal resources of the grantee, the urgency of the project and other factors herein described in recommending this grant.

Pursuant Section 31400.3, the Conservancy is authorized “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.” Consistent with this section, the proposed project will assist Sonoma County, in developing a programmatic environmental document for the system of accessways planned for the Bodega Bay area as described in the Bodega Bay CIP.

Pursuant to Section 31409, the Conservancy is authorized to award grants and provide assistance to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to establish and expand those inland trails systems that may be linked to the California Coastal Trail. The proposed project is consistent with this section as it will provide the environmental document necessary for California Environmental Quality Act review and lead to the construction of multiple segments connecting the California Coastal Trail through this southern section of Sonoma County.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Consistent with **Goal 2 - Objective C & D:** the proposed project will enable the necessary environmental review for the construct of a series of trail projects to complete the California Coastal Trail and provide safe bike and pedestrian coastal accessways for the public through the Bodega Bay area of Sonoma County.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is 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 public provided input to the Conceptual Improvement Plan that includes the proposed project, and regional partners have submitted letters in support of the project (Exhibit 5).
4. **Location:** The proposed project is an environmental review document regarding trail segments along the coast in the Bodega Bay environs. The future trail segments will be constructed on a variety of publicly owned properties and right-of-ways within the

coastal zone.

5. **Need:** Absent Conservancy funding, the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department will be unable to complete the necessary steps for implementation of the trails designed in the Conceptual Improvement Plan.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project area provides non-vehicular access in a highly congested and dangerous segment of Highway 1 used by those seeking recreation through bird watching, hiking, biking, beach visits and site-seeing in the harbor area of this Sonoma County coastal community. Bodega Bay as a whole, including its natural resources and fishing town character, attracts local families and visitors as well as regional and international tourists.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** The need to pursue a safe trail access separate from Highway 1 through Bodega Bay is urgent. The proposed project will provide environmental review for a safe, continuous route from Salmon Creek, through Bodega Bay and down to the spit at Doran Beach Park.
8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The project includes elements that will both extend the reach of the California Coastal Trail and close a gap between multiple community and recreation destinations that are unsafe to reach by bicycle and foot along the narrow and highly traveled stretch of Highway 1 in Bodega Bay.
9. **Leverage:** The Conservancy's contribution to this project is leveraged by funding from partner agencies, as discussed in the "Project History" section above.
10. **Readiness:** Sonoma County has begun to implement initial projects identified in the Conceptual Improvement Plan (September 2005) and has the capacity and readiness to conduct the proposed project for environmental review leading to subsequent trail construction projects.
11. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.
12. **Cooperation:** The project was developed through the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Study which involved many stakeholders and agencies working together to identify trail opportunities. The proposed project will enable environmental review of trail segments that will be cooperatively funded for implementation.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan involves properties that are located within the Coastal Zone and are subject to the jurisdiction of the County of Sonoma's Local Coastal Program (Certified June 1982, Amended December 2001). The proposed project

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is consistent with the relevant sections of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) and the County of Sonoma's General Plan.

Consistent with Section V (Recreation) of Sonoma County's LCP and Section 30210 of the Coastal Act, "maximum access and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people, consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from over use," the proposed project will provide environmental review for increased public access to the resources along Bodega Bay by adding to the California Coastal Trail and improving safe passage off Highway 1.

Consistent with Section VI (Harbor) and Coastal Act Section 30221, "ocean front land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreation activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area," the proposed project will provide additional access for bird watching, hiking, biking and water sports by linking State Park, regional parks and recreational access areas around the harbor with the California Coastal Trail.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project will enable the Sonoma County to complete a programmatic environmental document that meets the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Bodega Bay CIP. Sonoma County will submit a draft environmental document for public and agency review. Following response to public and agency comments on the draft, the SCRPD will submit a final environmental document to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

As the proposed project involves CEQA compliance, no additional CEQA approval is required.