

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

April 24, 2008

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA CONSERVANCY PROGRAM: LAND
CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP**

File No. 08-023-01

Project Manager: Melanie Denninger

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$360,000 to Greenbelt Alliance to complete the Upland Habitat Goals report, update the Transit to Outdoors map, conduct workshops to improve the effectiveness of land conservation and stewardship measures, and further the natural resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.

LOCATION: All nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area (San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa, Sonoma, Marin)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Letters of Support](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed three hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$360,000) to Greenbelt Alliance to complete the Upland Habitat Goals report, update the Transit to Outdoors map, improve web-based communication tools for Bay Area land conservation organizations, conduct workshops to improve the effectiveness of land conservation and stewardship measures, and further the natural resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Prior to disbursement of any Conservancy funds, Greenbelt Alliance shall submit for review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a detailed work program, timeline, and budget, and the names and qualifications of any intended contractors.”

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:

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1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code (Sections 31160-31165) regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines last updated by the Conservancy on September 20, 2007.
 3. Greenbelt Alliance is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to \$360,000 to Greenbelt Alliance, to complete the Upland Habitat Goals project, update the Transit to Outdoors map, conduct workshops to improve the effectiveness of land conservation and stewardship measures, and further the natural resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Greenbelt Alliance will administer this project under the direction of the Bay Area Open Space Council (Council). The Council, the members of which include over 50 Bay Area non-profit conservation organizations and land management agencies throughout the Bay Area, will work with a broad array of additional organizations within and beyond the conservation community to accomplish these objectives.

Under the proposed project, the Greenbelt Alliance and the Council will continue to engage in the types of projects and programs that these organizations have successfully managed with past funding from the Conservancy, the Council’s members and private foundations. (See “Project History.”) Among the projects and programs proposed for funding under the current authorization are the following:

- Complete the Upland Habitat Goals report, a decision-support tool that Conservancy staff and others will use to prioritize funding and project development for the acquisition, preservation, and enhancement of upland habitat in the Bay Area. Phase 1 has been completed, including analysis and integration of existing vegetation data, peer-reviewed identification of conservation targets and methodology, an initial identification of high priority plant community protection areas, and a web page describing the project and making data layers available to the public. The work needed to complete the report includes refining conservation targets using information about the occurrence and needs of representative fauna and stream and riparian habitat and climate change projections; expanding the web page; producing the report; engaging in public outreach to promote understanding and use of the report; and integrating the report into related regional planning processes, such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan and Green Vision.
- Conduct workshops to improve the effectiveness of open space and natural resource conservation and stewardship measures.
- Finally, continue to build regional partnerships and provide practical support for project implementation through the workshops and information exchange meetings that it

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facilitates, including bi-monthly meetings, annual reports on the accomplishments of the Bay Program, and its annual conference.

Greenbelt Alliance is a private nonprofit organization established in 1958. Its mission is “to make the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area a better place to live by protecting the region’s greenbelt and improving the livability of its cities and towns.” Since the late 1990s, the Greenbelt Alliance has worked closely with the Council on mutual objectives. Both the Greenbelt Alliance and the Council have shown through successful management of past Conservancy grants (see “Project History” below) that they have the ability to manage all of the proposed work.

Site Description: The nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Project History: The Council has played a unique role in the history of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Bay Program), beginning with the organization of a coalition of public agencies, nonprofit land conservation organizations, and environmental, business and agricultural interests that won passage of SB104 establishing the Bay Program in 1997. Since that time, the Council has served its members and the general public as a leader in land conservation planning and implementation, and has helped the Bay Program stay updated on challenges and opportunities around the Bay Area.

The Conservancy has helped to support Greenbelt Alliance and the Council through several previous grants. When combined those grants total almost \$1.5 million and have been matched by grants of over \$1.5 million from private foundations and members of the Council, who pay annual dues. The Alliance and the Council have a consistent record of delivering quality work products with Conservancy funding.

The Upland Habitat Goals component of work under the recommended grant is a continuation of a project for earlier steps of which the Conservancy has provided a total of \$122,500, with total of \$116,500 in matching funds committed to date by the Resources Agency (\$16,500), the Betty and Gordon Moore Foundation (\$50,000) and the Doris Duke Foundation (\$50,000), and an additional \$50,000 pending from another foundation.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$360,000
Other sources (estimated)	<u>338,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$698,000

The anticipated source of funds is the fiscal year 07/08 appropriation from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) (Public Resources Code Sections 75001 *et seq.*) for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Consistent with Section 75060, the project is intended to help protect natural habitat values of the San Francisco Bay watershed and is undertaken pursuant to the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, as discussed below.

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The Council expects to obtain at least \$338,300 in matching funds. Funds already committed include \$24,500 from the Resources Legacy Fund, \$80,000 from the Goldman Fund, \$43,500 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, \$3,000 from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, \$300 from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority, and \$50,000 from membership dues. In addition, the Council expects to receive raise \$25,000 from registration for its annual conference and expects to obtain a total of another \$112,000 from proposals that are pending with several foundations.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project is undertaken in accordance with Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31165, regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.

Section 31163(a) directs the Conservancy to cooperate with local and regional government bodies, non-profit organizations, and other interested parties in identifying and adopting long-term resource and recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay Area. Section 31163(b) directs the Conservancy to participate in and support interagency actions and public/private partnerships in the San Francisco Bay Area for the purpose of implementing subdivision (a), and providing for broad-based local involvement in, and support for, the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. The Open Space Council greatly enhances the ability of Bay Program staff to cooperate and participate in regional planning through the meetings, conferences, committees, and workshops it organizes for both its membership of more than 50 conservation organizations and agencies and for the interested public at large.

This project is appropriate for prioritization under the selection criteria set forth in Section 31163(c) in that (1) it is supported by a multitude of local and regional plans that call for coordinated action to protect open space and recreational opportunities for local and regional use; (2) it serves a regional constituency – the nine-county Bay Area; (3) it can be implemented in a timely way because many projects and all staff are already in place; and (4) it is anticipated to include matching funds.

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

Consistent with **Goal 9** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will help the Conservancy maintain a list of high priority resource and recreational areas.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on September 20, 2007, 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.

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2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The Bay Area Open Space Council, supported by Greenbelt Alliance, comprises more than 50 public agencies and nonprofit land conservation organizations. Letters of support are included in Exhibit 1.
4. **Location:** The proposed project focuses on the entire nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.
5. **Need:** Without the Conservancy’s financial support, it would be difficult for the Council to keep in place the regional networks and relationships which make it possible to respond effectively to issues as they arise and to support the purposes of the Bay Program.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed project has a regional scope, including all nine Bay Program counties.

Additional Criteria

7. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
8. **Readiness:** The Open Space Council/Greenbelt Alliance is well positioned to conduct the project in a timely manner, as it has successfully carried out projects that further the purposes of the Conservancy and the Bay Program since 1991 and has earned the respect of its member constituents and funding agencies and organizations.
9. **Cooperation:** The Open Space Council/Greenbelt Alliance builds cooperation among regional agencies as a primary focus of its work and does so with its 50-strong membership of agencies and organizations.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA: Under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 15262, feasibility and planning activities are statutorily exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. Each of the proposed activities will directly involve consideration of environmental factors.