

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 25, 2008

GALINDO CREEK TRAIL GAP CLOSURE PROJECT
(Part of the California Riding & Hiking Trail)

File No. 08-074-01
Project Manager: Michelle Jespersen

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$150,000 to the City of Concord to complete a 600-foot gap in the historic 20-mile long California Riding and Hiking trail by installing a 74-foot long pedestrian bridge over Galindo Creek and constructing a 528-foot long trail.

LOCATION: Ygnacio Valley Road and Alberta Way, City of Concord, Contra Costa County (Exhibit 1).

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Trail Map](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Aerial View of the Project Site](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Photographs](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)
- Exhibit 5: [Mitigated Negative Declaration for the “Galindo Creek Trail Gap Closure Project,” City of Concord Resolution, Mitigation Monitoring Program, and Notice of Determination \(Adopted April 26, 2005\)](#)

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 (the “Conservancy”) hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed \$150,000 (one-hundred fifty thousand dollars) to the City of Concord (the “City”) to complete a 600-foot gap in the historic 20-mile long California Riding and Hiking trail by installing a 74-foot long pedestrian bridge over Galindo Creek and constructing a 528-foot long trail. This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds for this project, the City shall submit for review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:
 - a. A work program, including budget and schedule of completion.
 - b. A sign plan to acknowledge Conservancy funding for the project.
 - c. The names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed on the project.
 - d. Documentation that all permits and approvals necessary to completion of the project.
2. The City shall provide evidence to the Executive Officer of the Conservancy that it has implemented the Mitigation Monitoring Program, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 5.”

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 is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
3. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for the “Galindo Creek Trail Gap Closure Project” adopted by the City of Concord on April 26, 2005 pursuant to CEQA (Exhibit 5) and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The proposed authorization of up to \$150,000 will enable the City of Concord to complete a 600-foot gap in the historic 20-mile long California Riding and Hiking trail by installing a 74-foot long pedestrian bridge over Galindo Creek and constructing a 528-foot long segment of trail (the “project”). The California Riding and Hiking Trail is a popular trail for horseback riding and hiking that dates back to the 1940’s. The trail starts at the Nejedly Staging Area at Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, passes over the Franklin Hills in Martinez, continues past numerous city parks in Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and Concord, and ends at Lime Ridge Open Space Preserve. This project will fill the last remaining segment of this trail needed for riders and hikers to complete the 20-mile journey, as well as provide a completed trail to connect to the Bay Trail and other regional trails in the vicinity. Finally, installation of the bridge crossing over Galindo Creek will ensure safe passage for trail users and reduce impacts to the stream channel.

The project consists of three components: (1) construction of an 8-foot wide, 528-foot long trail located on the east side of Galindo Creek; (2) installation of a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge over Galindo Creek; (3) construction of a pier and tie back wall to stabilize a hillside adjacent to Galindo Creek, thus protecting the planned trail downhill of the roadway. Under current conditions, the existing trail at the intersection of Ygnacio Valley Road and Alberta Way relies on an overcrossing that requires trail users to exit the trail, walk along the shoulder of Ygnacio

Valley Road adjacent to a vehicle-traveled lane for a distance of approximately 700 feet to Alberta Way, cross Ygnacio Valley Road, then rejoin the trail on Pine Hollow Road (see Exhibit 2). The trail then continues under Ynagcio Valley Road where trail users must pass through one of two concrete box culverts constructed in 1954 near Alberta Way and Pine Hollow Road. The ten foot by six foot culvert was designed to convey storm water along Galindo Creek and to provide access for the trail. Currently, this culvert is silted and contains water for most of the year, if not all year, and therefore cannot be used by pedestrians. If the culvert were de-silted, pedestrians would still need to walk along the channel bed upon exiting or entering the culvert because the culvert inlet and outlet feeds into the channel. As a result, the trail via the over-and under-crossing is hardly used.

The new trail will be located at the northerly side (downhill) of Ygnacio Valley Road. It will begin about 100 feet east of Galindo Creek, cross Galindo Creek via a pre-fabricated bridge, parallel the creek and terminate at a staging area 500 feet west of the creek (see photos in Exhibit 3). The trail will be located about 25 feet from the creek or as required by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). This segment of trail will provide trail users from throughout the Bay Area access and opportunities to utilize a wide array of regional trails and open space throughout central Contra Costa County along the 20-mile California Riding and Hiking Trail. The City is a qualified and appropriate recipient of funds for this project because they are the lead agency under CEQA and the project will be located within the city limits. The City has already dedicated a tremendous amount of staff time and effort into the trail planning, environmental review and fundraising. The City is prepared to carry out this project.

Site Description: As described above, the project site is located in the City of Concord, where Ygnacio Valley Road intersects with Alberta Way and Pine Hollow Road, approximately one mile south of access points to Lime Ridge Open Space Preserve (see Exhibit 1). The 600-foot trail gap section is located along and crosses a channelized section of Galindo Creek.

Project History: The Conservancy does not have a funding history with respect to the California Riding and Hiking trail but has supported development of a numerous trails in the regional trail system throughout Contra Costa County including trails that connect to the California Riding and Hiking Trail.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$150,000
State Proposition 1B	\$593,500
Land & Water Conservation Funds	\$200,000
East Bay Regional Park District	\$60,000
Transportation Development Act Grants	\$210,000
City of Concord (Parkland Fees, Gas Tax & General Fund)	<u>\$324,777</u>
Total Project Cost	\$1,538,277

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the fiscal year 07/08 "Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006" (Proposition 84) appropriation to the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. These

funds may be used for the development of land resources in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. The proposed project will allow for the development of land-based public access by completing a 600-foot gap in a 20-mile long regional trail in Contra Costa County consistent with Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation as described below. The City of Concord will contribute nearly \$325,000 toward the project and is leveraging additional funds from various sources and partners to complete the project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project is consistent with the provisions of Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165, which authorizes the Conservancy to award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area to help achieve stated goals. Specifically, the proposed project, located entirely within the San Francisco Bay Area, supports the achievement of the goals as stated in Section 31162(a) and (d) described in more detail below.

Pursuant to section 31162(a) of the Public Resources Code, the Conservancy may award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that will help "improve public access to, within and around the bay, coast, ridgetops, and urban open spaces..." The proposed project will complete a 20-mile long regional trail that connects to other regional trails in the vicinity and population centers, and is consistent with the City of Concord's Trail Master Plan. As required by Section 31162(a), the project will not have a significant adverse impact on environmentally sensitive areas. This project is also consistent with section 31162(d) to promote, assist and enhance projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes in that the completion of the 600 foot trail gap will enhance access to recreational opportunities for urban populations, including the cities of Concord, Walnut Creek, Pleasanton, and Martinez.

The Galindo Creek Trail Gap Closure project also satisfies all the criteria for determining project priority under 31163(c) because the project: (1) is supported by the City of Concord Trail Master Plan; (2) includes multi-jurisdictional participation from other state, county, and local agencies and special districts and serves a regional constituency that will enjoy public access through the use of the completed trail; (3) will be implemented immediately; (4) provides benefits that would be lost if the project is not quickly implemented because matching funds for the project will expire in 2009; and (5) includes significant matching funds.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective I** of the Conservancy's 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will construct approximately 600 feet of regionally significant public trail and community connection, including links between the Bay Trail, regional trails, and urban communities.

**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.
2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The project is supported by Senator Tom Torlakson, Assemblymen Mark DeSaulnier, and East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) (see Exhibit 4).
4. **Location:** This project is located in the City of Concord in Contra Costa County, one of the nine Bay Area Counties.
5. **Need:** Without Conservancy funding, the City of Concord will not be able to leverage over \$1.2 million dollars in matching funds to complete construction of trail gap closure project.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project will complete the 20-mile long California Riding and Hiking Trail that starts at Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline where it connects to the San Francisco Bay Trail, passes over the Franklin Hills in Martinez and continues past numerous parks and open spaces within Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and Concord, terminating at Lime Ridge Open Space Preserve. The trail connects and crosses multiple regional trails including the Contra Costa Canal Regional Trail, the Iron Horse Regional Trail, and the Mt. Diablo to Briones Regional Trail.

Additional Criteria

7. **Urgency:** Matching funds will expire in early 2009. Construction must begin before the end of the 2008 calendar year, consistent with all regulatory requirements for the construction period so that funds do not expire.
8. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The project will provide a 20-mile continuous trail from Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline in Martinez to Lime Ridge Open Space Preserve in the City of Walnut Creek, including trail connections between population centers and public facilities, recreation, and a connection to the Bay Trail.
9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
10. **Innovation:** The project will reuse a pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge that is no longer needed by the EBRPD for a trail over Markley Creek in Antioch.
11. **Readiness:** The City of Concord completed the initial design, put the project out for bid, and is prepared to award the contract to the selected contractor to begin construction at the end of September 2008.
12. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** "See "Project History" above.

13. **Return to Conservancy:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
14. **Cooperation:** The City of Concord is working in close coordination with EBRPD whose staff has already provided assistance in trail planning and design and in donating the pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge. California Department of Parks and Recreation also supports this project through a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”), the City, as lead agency, prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Galindo Creek Trail Gap Closure Project. The draft MND was noticed and circulated for public review on January 26, 2005. The comment period ended on February 28, 2005 and no public comments were received. On April 26, 2005, the City adopted the MND and Mitigation Monitoring Program (“MMP”) (collectively, Exhibit 5) and approved the project, and filed a Notice of Determination on April 28, 2005. The Conservancy’s grant requires that the City implement the MMP.

CEQA requires consideration of potential environmental effects of agency actions and approvals, unless exempt. The Initial Study and MND identified potentially significant impacts of the proposed project in the areas of biological resources, geology/soils, hydrology/water quality, and noise. Mitigation measures were adopted to ensure that these potential impacts are avoided or reduced to *less-than-significant levels* as summarized here:

Biological Resources: Most of Contra Costa County is considered critical habitat for the California red-legged frog (CRLF), a species designated as ‘threatened’ under the California Endangered Species Act; however, a qualified biologist has reviewed the site and determined no CRLF are likely to be present. Another survey may be conducted prior to implementation of the project if required by CDFG prior to construction. The project will keep a minimum distance of 25 feet from the creek bank to minimize impact to potential CRLF habitat. Nesting raptors and other passerine birds could be impacted during construction; to mitigate these impacts to *less-than-significant levels*, nesting surveys will be conducted 30 days prior to construction if construction occurs between March 15th and August 31st. If nests are found, measures will be taken to identify the nests and provide a buffer area where no construction activities will occur.

Geology/Soils: A potential landslide was identified in the Draft Geotechnical Report prepared for this project. The slide area impacts will be mitigated to *less-than-significant levels* by constructing the hillside stabilization and improvement work that is part of the project.

Hydrology/Water quality: The proposed project includes work to stabilize the hillside adjacent to Galindo Creek where the trail will be constructed. An erosion control best management practices (BMP) plan will be incorporated into the project implementation to avoid erosion and sedimentation in the stream during construction. In addition, CDFG shall be contacted to determine if a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement is necessary. No impacts to the stream bed, bank, or channel are anticipated because the project will be constructed 25 feet from the top of Galindo Creek and the bridge abutments will be attached to the existing box culverts.

Noise: Construction would temporarily increase noise levels in the project vicinity; project specifications will require that all work be performed Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm when many residents are at work or school.

Conservancy staff has independently reviewed the City's MND and MMP for the proposed project and recommends that the Conservancy, as a responsible agency under CEQA, find that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will result in significant effect on the environment as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Determination for this project.