

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

May 27, 2010

CIGARETTE LITTER ABATEMENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Project No. 10-002

Project Manager: Doug George

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$50,000 to Save Our Shores to develop a cigarette litter abatement demonstration project to reduce watershed and beach cigarette litter in Santa Cruz County.

LOCATION: Cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola, Santa Cruz County, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Integrated Coastal and Marine Resource Protection

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Letters](#)

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 disbursement of an amount not to exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to Save Our Shores to develop a cigarette litter abatement demonstration project to determine best practices for reducing watershed and beach cigarette litter in Santa Cruz County. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the Executive Officer of the Conservancy shall review and approve in writing a work program, budget and schedule for the project and any contractors proposed to be engaged 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 project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 5.5 (Section 31220) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding undertaking coastal

watershed and coastal and marine habitat water quality projects to reduce contamination of waters within the coastal zone or marine waters, to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat within coastal and marine waters and coastal watersheds, and to reduce threats to coastal and marine fish and wildlife.

3. Save Our Shores is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”
-

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff requests that the Conservancy authorize up to \$50,000 to Save Our Shores (SOS) to develop a cigarette litter abatement demonstration project to determine best practices for reducing watershed and beach cigarette litter in Santa Cruz County. The project will evaluate the efficacy of cigarette litter collection receptacles. The receptacles will be deployed in high pedestrian traffic smoking areas, as identified by City officials from Santa Cruz and Capitola, in need of receptacle installation and monitored for up to 12 months. At the conclusion of the project, SOS will provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the receptacles.

This project will educate the community about the risks to the environment from cigarette litter. The public will be provided with the infrastructure to reduce the quantity of cigarette litter polluting the coastal public access areas and marine habitats (beaches, creeks, and nearshore waters) that serve as valued natural, recreational and commercial resources within Monterey Bay communities.

SOS has found through its data collection that cigarette butts are the most littered items in cleanups. In two years under a State Coastal Conservancy grant, SOS staff and volunteers have collected more than 69,000 butts through a marine debris removal program around Monterey Bay communities. Two reasons that cigarette butts are littered are: not enough ashtrays available for use and public perception that cigarette butts are not harmful to the environment. This project addresses both actual litter by providing receptacles and prevention of litter through outreach to community members.

Building on its established beach clean-up activities, SOS will conduct two cleanups a month at each proposed installation site for two months to establish a baseline dataset. SOS will use its Marine Debris Data Card to track how many cigarette butts are collected at each site during an hour long cleanup. SOS will then install up to 20 cigarette litter receptacles within the city limits of Capitola and Santa Cruz. SOS will continue to conduct two cleanups per month at each installation site for up to 12 months. Data will be tracked in an online database to compare the amount of cigarette butts collected prior to and after installation. The receptacles themselves will be serviced to track the number of cigarette butts diverted from becoming litter. SOS will coordinate this activity with regular maintenance of the receptacles.

In addition to the installation of cigarette butt receptacles, SOS will work with the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola to educate the public about this problem through the “No Butts About It” campaign. Local newspaper advertisements, Public Service Announcements for local radio stations (KSCO, KZSC and KUSP), the SOS website, newsletter, and mailing list, and outreach by volunteers will encourage the community to pick up cigarette butts from local beaches, streets, and parks before the cigarette butts end up as marine debris and potentially threaten the

health of marine organisms. SOS will highlight the campaign at community events, with particular emphasis during its largest event of the year, the July 4th Pollution Prevention Day, when 40,000 people typically visit the county's beaches. The combination of the receptacles, focused collection efforts around the receptacles and broad education effort is expected to show that simultaneous approaches are necessary to reduce cigarette litter. Recognizing that cigarette litter problems are commonly a result of individual behavior, SOS intends to use this campaign to encourage the community to prevent these items from entering and degrading the County's key coastal and ocean public access areas.

Save Our Shores

Save Our Shores is a 501(c) (3) organization based in Santa Cruz that promotes marine conservation through policy research, education, and citizen involvement. Established in 1978 to counter the threat of offshore oil drilling along the central coast, SOS has a long history of working within the local communities surrounding Monterey Bay to safeguard the region's exceptional shoreline and marine environment.

SOS is well qualified to carry out this demonstration project. SOS organized the first-known public beach cleanup in Santa Cruz by SOS in 1981 as well as the Interpretive Beach Cleanup and Clean Boating Programs in 1996. SOS has established effective grassroots approaches to providing direct remediation and education through local community-based initiatives, mobilizing volunteers as citizen scientists. The Sanctuary Watch Program educates citizens on regulations associated with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and encourages the reporting of incidents and violations within the Sanctuary to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Cleaner Beaches Coalition was formed by SOS to streamline efforts to clean Santa Cruz County beaches through collaboration with other organizations on common program elements. SOS partners with other community organizations and local government to coordinate the spray painting of "Drains to Bay" warnings on storm drains. Several of these programs have since been replicated at the state level by the California Coastal Commission and other agencies.

SOS will provide reports to the Conservancy regarding project progress and evaluation as well as statistics on the collection of cigarette litter from the receptacles. A final report at the conclusion of the demonstration project with an assessment of the receptacles and public perception will also be provided by SOS to the Conservancy.

Site Description: The cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola are an ideal laboratory to perform a demonstration project due to their aggressive stances in protecting their coastal environments. SOS will work with City officials from Santa Cruz and Capitola to identify high pedestrian traffic smoking areas. Probable locations include the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, and the Capitola Esplanade. Exhibit 1 shows the targeted areas in the two cities.

Project History:

The public beaches of the central coast of California are widely used by coastal and inland citizens for recreational enjoyment. Unfortunately, the increasing amount of debris

accumulating in the ocean and along the shoreline is threatening the environmental quality of coastal areas by polluting beaches and estuaries, harming wildlife, and contributing to poor water quality. Cigarette litter is a dominant component of this debris. Research has identified organic compounds and heavy metals that can leach out of the cigarette litter. Other research has found cigarette litter from streets and sidewalks have a direct nexus to “acute aquatic toxicity” by way of public sector storm drainage systems. The California Ocean Protection Council identified redressing cigarette litter as one of 16 recommendations in its 2008 Implementation Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Ocean Litter.

The 2006 Community Assessment Project poll in Santa Cruz County found that water pollution was the top of the list of ecological concerns by area residents. SOS has been conducting beach clean-ups since 1981 and has witnessed firsthand the continuous accumulation of cigarette litter at coastal access areas in the Monterey Bay region. Monterey Bay beaches serve as a major attraction for California tourists and residents: the Bay’s marine waters serve as an ocean recreation paradise, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk recently celebrated its 100th anniversary and provides recreational enjoyment to thousands of visitors and citizens each year and quaint coastal communities like Capitola provide popular summer destinations for many living inland.

The Conservancy made a grant of \$100,000 to SOS in 2007 to remove and characterize marine debris. This program has yielded important results by characterizing the amount of litter found in watersheds and along beaches in communities around Monterey Bay. The proposed demonstration project capitalizes on the relationships and expertise developed by the 2007 grant.

This project takes aim at a dominant source of marine debris by educating the public and assessing a promising type of infrastructure. By involving the public and local government agencies, this project will examine methods to change individuals’ behavior to ensure a reduction of cigarette litter and its associated threats to the marine and coastal environment.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
Total Project Costs	\$50,000.00

The expected source of Conservancy funds for the demonstration project is the FY 2008/09 appropriation to the Conservancy from the Environmental License Plate Fund. Under Public Resources Code Section 21190, these funds may generally be used for preservation, enhancement, and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, and related water quality, as well as environmental education. Consistent with these requirements, the proposed demonstration project will serve to enhance water quality in areas around Monterey Bay that are used by fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, and conduct a public education program regarding the harmful effects of cigarette litter.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 5.5 (Section 31220) of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding Integrated Coastal and Marine Resources Protection. Section 31220(a) authorizes the Conservancy to undertake and award grants for projects that meet one or more of the criteria of Section 31220(b). Consistent

with §31220(b), the project will reduce contamination of waters within the coastal zone or marine waters, protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat within coastal and marine waters and coastal watersheds, reduce threats to coastal and marine fish and wildlife, and reduce the impact of population and economic pressures on coastal and marine resources.

Consistent with §31220(a), staff has consulted with State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”) in the development of the project to ensure consistency with Chapter 3 (commencing with §30915) [Clean Beaches Program] of Division 20.4 of the Public Resources Code.

Consistent with §31220(c), the project includes a monitoring component to evaluate project effectiveness. Also consistent with §31220(c), the project is consistent with water quality control plans. (See “Consistency With Local Watershed Management Plan/State Water Quality Control Plan,” section below).

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

Consistent with **Goal 3, Objective C** of the Conservancy’s 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will complete a project that conducts public environmental education through displays and events.

Consistent with **Goal 6, Objective F** of the Conservancy’s 2007 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will complete a project that improves water quality to benefit coastal resources.

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 June 4, 2009, 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 local officials from Santa Cruz and Capitola, the Coastal Commission and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Letters of support are attached as Exhibit 2.
4. **Location:** This project will be conducted in the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola to benefit the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the city beaches.
5. **Need:** Cigarette litter is the most commonly littered item found on beaches and by far the most abundant item recovered during the past 22 years of California’s Coastal Cleanup Day,

commonly comprising 35-40% of all litter items. This single source of litter is a hazard to public health, detrimental to habitat, aesthetically displeasing and kills wildlife that consumes it. Smoking bans on beaches have not resulted in significant decreases in the occurrence of cigarette butts because of 1) lack of enforcement and 2) lack of disposal infrastructure at transition points between smoking and non-smoking regions.

6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project is consistent with the goals outlined in the Ocean Protection Council's Resolution on Reducing and Preventing Marine Debris, adopted in February 2007 and Implementation Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Ocean Litter, adopted in November 2008. This project will also serve as a model for other California communities in developing comprehensive and effective strategies to reduce the impact of cigarette litter.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** While the demonstration project is meant to last for 12 months, the average lifespan of the receptacles is less than 20 years. During this time, the expected sea level rise will not place the infrastructure at risk.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** Marine debris is now recognized as a major problem affecting coastal and marine ecosystems. Abatement and source control of marine debris was elevated as a statewide priority in the Marine Debris Resolution adopted by the Ocean Protection Council in February 2007. This project complements interagency coordination efforts underway at the state level.
12. **Innovation:** This project will investigate how the combination of infrastructure and public education could reduce cigarette litter in locations that are known to be hotspots for accumulation of smoking waste products. The partnership is designed to maximize existing relationships among regional entities and encourage collaboration between community organizations and government agencies and officials to develop best practices to employ throughout coastal jurisdictions.
13. **Readiness:** SOS is able to begin implementation of this project before the beginning of Summer 2010.
14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

By conducting a demonstration project that will improve water quality and provide education and outreach on watershed issues and best management practices, the proposed project will help to satisfy several of the priorities listed in the County's 1994 certified General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP):

- Objective 5.2 Riparian Corridors and Wetlands: To preserve, protect and restore all riparian corridor and wetlands for the protection of wildlife and aquatic habitat, water quality, erosion control, open space, aesthetic and recreational values and the conveyance and storage of flood waters (p. 5-9).
- Program (h): Identify and restore aquatic and marine habitats which have been damaged due to human activities (p.5-13).

- Objective 5.4 Monterey Bay and Coastal Water Quality: To improve the water quality of Monterey Bay and other Santa Cruz County coastal waters by supporting and/or requiring the best management practices for the control and treatment of urban run-off and wastewater discharges in order to maintain local, state, and national water quality standards, protect county residents from health hazards of water pollution, protect the County's sensitive marine habitats and prevent the degradation of the scenic character of the region (p. 5-14).

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

The project components are consistent with the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin (adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region in 1994 and reviewed every three years) in that they will further the following beneficial use objectives:

- Water Contact Recreation
- Non-water Contact Recreation
- Estuarine habitat
- Wildlife habitat
- Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The installation of cigarette litter receptacles in a limited number of locations is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under 14 Cal. Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15303, covering new construction and minor modifications of small structures, and Section 15311, construction of accessory structures associated with existing infrastructure. Data collection and analysis and the development of a monitoring program, are categorically exempt under 14 CCR Section 15306. Staff will file a notice of exemption upon approval by the Conservancy.