

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
Staff Recommendation
August 5, 2010

CAMPUS LAGOON ACCESSWAY

Project No. 10-006-01
Project Manager: Rachel Couch

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$175,000 to the Regents of the University of California to construct a public coastal accessway near the Campus Lagoon at the University of California, Santa Barbara in Santa Barbara County.

LOCATION: University of California, Southern Santa Barbara County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

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

Exhibit 2: [Photos and Figures](#)

Exhibit 3: CEQA Documentation:

[3a. Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)

[3b. Mitigation and Monitoring Plan](#)

Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400-31410 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed \$175,000 (one hundred seventy-five thousand dollars) to the Regents of the University of California to construct a public coastal accessway and restore a degraded section of the adjacent bluff slope near the University of California, Santa Barbara Campus Lagoon in Santa Barbara, as shown on Exhibit 1 to the accompanying staff recommendation. This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of any Conservancy funds, the Regents of the University of California shall submit for review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:
 - a. A work program, including final design plans and specifications, schedule and budget for construction.

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- b. Evidence that all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained.
 - c. A signing plan for the project acknowledging Conservancy funding.
2. The Regents of the University of California or its successor in interest shall manage and maintain the project for a period of not less than twenty years.”

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 Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400-31410) regarding public access to the coast.
3. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared and adopted by the University of California, Santa Barbara on November 28, 2008 for the project and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy provide up to \$175,000 to the Regents of the University of California (“grantee”) to construct a public coastal accessway and restore a degraded section of the bluff slope near Campus Lagoon and Campus Point. The project will allow easy access to a treasured coastal viewpoint located within a two mile-long, open space section of the California Coastal Trail in Santa Barbara County. An otherwise wide access trail is interrupted by a steep, hazardous, and highly eroded 30-foot tall coastal bluff. The project will allow people to safely traverse the bluff on an elevated stairway designed to eliminate human pressure on the fragile bluff and blend in to the environment (Exhibit 1).

The project includes construction of the accessway over the eroding bluff and restoration of the adjacent degraded bluff slope. The California Coastal Trail sections through the University of California, Santa Barbara (“UCSB”) campus on either side of this broken link are broad, compacted and well-used, whereas this control point is a sandy, eroded bluff limiting access and exacerbating erosion (see photos). Known as Campus Point, this high-profile coastal mesa overlooks a beautiful view down the coast and out to the Channel Islands, and forms the headlands of a popular surf point. In addition to surfers, this area is frequented by students, faculty, staff, K-12 visitors to the Research Experience and Education Facility (REEF), and community members.

The accessway will replace an existing series of informal trails that lead from the east side of Campus Lagoon and north side of Campus Point up the slope to the bluff top. In its current state, this short section of the California Coastal Trail is unsafe, and too difficult for some users. The informal footpaths contribute to severe gullying and erosion of the slopes on the bluff edge. An elevated accessway will prevent continued erosion and degradation of the bluff slope and allow for revegetation of impacted areas with appropriate native plants. As part of this project, California Coastal Trail emblems will be installed on the accessway.

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The stairway design is based on a highly functional stairway on an adjacent bluff. Caissons will be grounded in the underlying sisquoc shale layer and will provide the footings for the stairway which will be constructed from rot-resistant timbers and recycled plastic 'wood' decking. The proposed stairway will be functional and sustainable well beyond the twenty year project term. Because the site provides important views, the stairway design includes three viewing platforms sufficient in size for tour groups, with benches suitable for informal gatherings or for personal contemplation.

The restoration component of the project will involve (1) planting over 1000 native coastal bluff scrub plants sourced from local material, and (2) installing erosion control features such as silt fencing and biodegradable mats. Plant selection will be based on adaptation to sandy, coastal, wind-blown soil conditions and low-growing stature so that views are retained.

The construction will be overseen by UCSB's Design and Construction Services department due to university regulations and because they have extensive experience in this area. Restoration components will be managed by UCSB's Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER), utilizing participants in their restoration intern program. The intern training program provides hands-on experience for students interested in restoration ecology, research and management. CCBER currently manages over 151 acres on campus including several 6-10 acre mitigation projects as well as bioswale and stormwater management systems.

Site Description: The proposed access stairway is part of a particularly scenic section of the California Coastal Trail along open coastal bluffs within the protected UCSB Campus Lagoon management area. The trail is used regularly by surfers, runners, walkers, and bird watchers from campus and the community. The bluff slope is currently incised by five deep, eroding, sandy gullies with non-native iceplant in between. These challenging routes are used regularly which exacerbates erosion and interrupts an otherwise very accessible route along the coastal mesas in the area.

There are seven interpretive signs along the trail around the lagoon and multiple restored and yet-to-be restored habitat types in the area. These include restored coastal dunes, salt marsh, coastal bluff scrub and existing stands of cypress and eucalyptus trees used for egret and cormorant roosting, and wide expanses of iceplant intermixed with non-native annual grasses and native, ruderal coyote bush (*Baccharis pilularis*). In addition, visitors encounter restored vernal pools and marshes, native grassland, coastal sage scrub and an establishing oak woodland further along the trail. Due to the incremental nature of the restoration of the lagoon area there are ongoing opportunities for people to participate in and observe the transformation of habitats from weeds to diverse, self-sustaining natural communities. The California Coastal Trail segment includes numerous views of the ocean, the Channel Islands, and the Campus Lagoon and buildings.

Earlier efforts to construct stairs from railroad ties on the bluff are evident, however, the unstable sandy soils are not suitable for surface construction techniques.

The REEF, an educational touch tank for local school children interpreted by trained UCSB students, is just 100 yards to the east of the base of the stairway. UCSB is an educational center with an ever changing pool of 20,000 students who will have improved access to coastal resources through the installation of this stairway.

Project History: In August 2003 the Conservancy provided a grant of \$100,000 to the UCSB Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration (CCBER) to prepare a restoration

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management and access plan for the Campus Lagoon area, building upon the 1999 Campus Lagoon Management Plan. The lagoon provides an important open space and recreational area for UCSB students and area residents alike, and also serves as a natural laboratory for students of restoration ecology. Campus Lagoon enhancement planning was included as a Tier 2 project on the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Work Plan from 2003-2006. In 2008 the completed plans, including initial designs for the stairway, were presented to the Santa Barbara County Wetlands Recovery Project Task Force. Conservancy staff agreed to propose the access stairway improvement for implementation funding. Projects identified in the Campus Lagoon Management Plan were collectively named the Lagoon Restoration Project for environmental review and permitting purposes. Since 2008, CCBER completed the project environmental review under California Environmental Quality Act. Completed CEQA review includes this accessway project as one component of the larger Lagoon Restoration Project. The Lagoon Restoration Project was approved by the California Coastal Commission in June 2010. CCBER has also obtained initial cost estimates and been awarded \$90,000 in funds from the UCSB Associated Student-funded Coastal Fund. Students concerned about coastal protection and access on campus are enthusiastic about this project. Campus approvals have been received and several articles in local papers have been published about the stairway. During this time CCBER has conducted restoration on adjacent mesa tops that will provide relevant experience for implementing the restoration at this project site in conjunction with the stairway installation.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$175,000
Coastal Fund (UCSB Associate Students)	90,000
<u>UCSB Lagoon Management</u>	<u>25,000</u>
 Total Project Costs	 \$290,000

The expected source for the Conservancy funds for this authorization is an appropriation to the Conservancy from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 (Section 75060 of the Public Resources Code) authorizes the use of these funds for the purposes of promoting access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state. Section 75060(b) of the Public Resources Code specifically allocates funding to the Conservancy for expenditure pursuant to the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. The proposed project serves to promote access to coastal resources and, as discussed in the section found immediately below, the project is consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21. For projects that protect natural resources, Proposition 84 requires that priority be given to projects that meet specified criteria (Public Resources Code Section 75071). The proposed project satisfies three of the five specified criteria:

1. **Landscape/habitat linkages:** The Campus Lagoon area links with other protected open space (Goleta Beach County Park, Goleta Slough Ecological Reserve, UCSB ESHA and Open Space, Coal Oil Point Reserve, and Ellwood-Devereux Open Space) via the beach and bluff, all of which contain important wildlife habitat (See Exhibit 1).

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2. **Properties that support relatively large areas of under-protected major habitat types:** The Campus Lagoon Management Area including Campus Point contains a variety of important habitat types, including sandy beach, rocky intertidal, dunes, coastal dune scrub, coastal sage scrub, coastal salt marsh, and willow riparian forest, freshwater marsh, and estuarine lagoon.
3. **Properties for which there is a non-state matching contribution toward the acquisition costs:** Funds in the amount of \$90,000 will be contributed by the UCSB Coastal Fund, a fund managed by UCSB students and \$25,000 will be provided by UCSB-CCBER.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 9 of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400-31410), regarding public access and enjoyment of coastal resources. Section 31400 states the Legislature's intent that the Conservancy play a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the coast. Through the proposed authorization the Conservancy would assist in reducing bluff erosion and maintaining safe public access to beach and coastal bluff open space along a popular segment of the California Coastal Trail.

Section 31400.2 authorizes the Conservancy to provide up to the total cost of the initial development of a public accessway by any public agency or nonprofit organization, and the amount of funding provided by the conservancy shall be determined by the total amount of funding available for coastal public accessway projects, the fiscal resources of the applicant, the urgency of the project relative to other eligible projects, and the application of factors prescribed by the Conservancy. Consistent with this section, the proposed amount of the Conservancy contribution was determined based on the total amount of funding available to the Conservancy for public access projects, the matching funds provided by the grantee (see Project Financing), and the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria, including project urgency (See Consistency with Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines). The proposed authorization would leverage matching funds totaling 40 percent of the project costs.

Section 31409 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants and provide assistance to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to establish and expand those inland trail systems that may be linked to the California Coastal Trail. The Regents of the University of California is a public agency that holds land at the UCSB campus traversed by the California Coastal Trail and is thus eligible for Conservancy assistance under this section.

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

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective B** of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, the proposed project would incorporate and install California Coastal Trail signs in key areas along a 0.75-mile segment of the California Coastal Trail in Santa Barbara County.

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective E** of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, this project would increase coastal recreational opportunities for residents and visitors by providing a new facility

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to address potentially dangerous conditions at the eroding bluff edge trail. It would also provide access for people who currently cannot use the trail because of the uneven surface.

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 project has the support of the students of UCSB, as demonstrated by their grant to CCBER from the Coastal Fund. The project also has the support of Assemblymember Pedro Nava and the Isla Vista Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. Letters of support are attached as Exhibit 4.
4. **Location:** The proposed project would be located within the coastal zone of Santa Barbara County.
5. **Need:** The proposed accessway must be built so that visitors can safely reach the beach and blufftop and in order to stem the increasing bluff face erosion. UCSB has secured just under half of the funding needed for this project, but a significant funding gap remains. Conservancy funding is needed to enable the project to move forward.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The trail section is part of the statewide California Coastal Trail. It is significant regionally because it links coastal open spaces and beaches on campus with Goleta Beach Park and Goleta Slough. The section of trail also connects the campus with the large contiguous open space west of Isla Vista including Coal Oil Point Reserve and Ellwood Mesa Open Space via the beach.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The project has been redesigned to reduce risk associated with projected sea level rise impacts based on a range of scenarios for the years 2050 and 2100. Specifically, the base of the stairway was moved onto the Campus Point land form and off of a revetment. The structure will be set on caissons embedded into the sisquoc shale zone of the soil profile and will be set back from wave action or potential direct impacts from sea level rise. The project has been evaluated by a geotechnical engineer who has assessed the risk and found no significant issues of bluff erosion.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** Without Conservancy funds for the accessway, UCSB will be unable to construct the stairway and the bluff will continue to erode and pose safety concerns.

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9. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The accessway will resolve issues of coastal bluff erosion and will facilitate habitat restoration. The accessway will also allow more types of users to easily access the bluff, rather than attempting to negotiate the steep, unstable terrain.
10. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Conflict resolution:** University Long Range Development Plan policy prohibits bicycle use from Lagoon Island through Campus Point. The accessway will limit inappropriate bicycle use and potential user conflict given that the stairway will prevent bicyclists from riding up and down the bluff slope.
12. **Innovation:** The project was designed to minimize use of materials in order to have less impact on the landscape and on natural resources. Recycled plastic “wood” decking will be used to reduce natural resource impacts and repurpose the waste stream for a productive use.
13. **Readiness:** Design work for the project is complete, and permits were granted in June, 2010. If the conservancy approves the proposed grant, UCSB expects to go to bid by February 2011 and complete construction by July 2011.
14. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** “See “Project History” above.
15. **Cooperation:** UCSB students and interns will help to install the restoration plantings providing an educational component to the project.
16. **Minimization of Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The project was designed to minimize use of materials in order to have less impact on the landscape and on natural resources. UCSB holds the highest rating for its construction related sustainable actions because of its recycling practices. Using recycled plastic 'wood' decking will reduce the impact on natural resources and intercept the waste stream for a productive use. Local contractors and materials (including cement) will be used whenever possible, minimizing vehicle miles traveled for the project, thereby minimizing greenhouse gas emissions (See Compliance with CEQA section for additional information).

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The project is covered by UCSB’s Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). The LRDP serves as the certified Local Coastal Program for this section of the coast. The LRDP recognizes the significance of providing and protecting coastal access and recreation. Policy 30210.15 states that UCSB shall continue to maintain and improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the beach as necessary to protect sensitive habitat areas and public safety. Consistent with this policy, the proposed stairway will reduce risk to trail users and protect sensitive bluff habitats from the impacts of those users. Although this project cannot accommodate bicycles due to steep topography, bicycles can use a paved alternative route along the west side of the lagoon. Policy 30210.18 states that UCSB will cooperate with the County of Santa Barbara and the California Department of Parks and Recreation in the expansion of the California Coastal Trail. The proposed stairway will repair an important link in the California Coastal Trail. The LRDP also designates the ocean bluffs around Campus Point as an environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA). The proposed project is consistent with policy 30240 of the LRDP requiring that ESHAs be protected from any significant disruption in habitat values.

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CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY'S STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESSWAY LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

The project is consistent with the Coastal Conservancy's Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development. In particular:

Standard No. 1, Protect the Public and Coastal Resources: The project is designed and located to minimize alteration of the natural landforms and to protect environmentally sensitive habitats by constructing a raised stairway over these habitat areas and by locating the accessway back from eroding bluffs. The trail would serve to prevent unwarranted hazards to public safety by replacing steep unstable terrain on the bluff face and incorporating hand railings and siding into the design.

Standard No. 2, Correct Hazards: The construction and management of this accessway will help reduce erosion on the project site through the installation of an elevated stairway and erosion control improvements, including vegetated buffer areas between the bluff face and stairway.

Standard No. 5, Environmentally Sensitive Areas: The project has been designed and routed to protect environmentally sensitive habitats as described above.

Standard No. 8, Trails: The accessway would connect an existing mile long segment of the California Coastal Trail between Goleta Beach and Campus Point with 0.75 miles of blufftop trail and several miles of interconnected campus open space trails.

Standard No. 9, Scenic Overlooks: The accessway would include new viewing platforms, benches and interpretive signs to enhance trail users enjoyment of scenic vistas of the ocean, beaches and surrounding open spaces.

Standard No. 12, Support Facilities: The project would benefit from support facilities on campus and adjacent to the project site including public restrooms, picnic benches, trash receptacles, and parking. Resource and cultural interpretation signs are included as part of the broader Campus Lagoon Management Plan, and would serve users of a nearby beach and open space.

Standard No. 13, Barrier-Free Access: The accessway would not be wheelchair-accessible due to the steep topography, but a paved alternative route around the west side of the lagoon allows wheelchair access to the coastal blufftop.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

UCSB is the lead agency for the accessway project for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). UCSB prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Lagoon Restoration Project, which includes the proposed project (See page 29 and Figure 9 in Exhibit 3a). UCSB approved the MND and Mitigation Monitoring Program on November 25, 2008. Consistent with 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 753.5(d), pertaining to potential adverse impacts of the project on fish and wildlife resources or the habitat on which wildlife depends, UCSB filed a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse on December 4, 2008 and paid the filing fee imposed by section 711.4 of the Fish and Game Code.

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Proposed mitigation measures that will avoid or reduce the possible effects to a level of insignificance are summarized in the Mitigation Monitoring Program (Exhibit 3b). The MND identified potentially significant environmental effects of the project in the areas of biological resources, geology and soils, and hydrology/water quality. The discussion below focuses on the Campus Point project area, which includes the accessway site and the blufftop mesa, where a restoration effort is planned.

Noise, Air Quality, Transportation/Traffic

The MND identified potentially significant effects associated with other projects in the larger Campus Lagoon Restoration Plan area, however, no significant noise, air quality or transportation/traffic effects were identified in the analysis of the Campus Lagoon accessway project. Therefore these potential impacts are not relevant to the project.

Cultural Resources

The larger lagoon project area contains known recorded archaeological site (SBa-563) in the vicinity of Campus Point. The site consists of a dense shell mound, or midden, and is thought to have been associated with a prehistoric base camp. The MND identified three potentially significant impacts to cultural resources associated with the larger restoration project that could be reduced to less than significant with mitigation. The larger restoration project could cause substantial adverse changes to the significance of archaeological resources during the removal of asphalt pad if excavation of the pad were done by heavy equipment being operated without knowledge of the site beneath the pad. Archeological resources could also be uncovered during grading for back dune swale creation. The project has the potential to impact paleontological resources or other geological features. No paleontological or significant geologic features have been reported within the boundary of work, though the coastal bluffs are considered a sensitive geologic area. Recommendations in the geotechnical report for the stairway (Fugro West, Inc. 2007) would be followed and implementation of erosion control measures would reduce impacts from erosion and sedimentation during construction of the accessway at Campus Point. The larger restoration project has the potential to disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries. There is no record of human remains in SBa-563 on Campus Point. This site consists of a dense shell midden. To minimize the impacts to the archeological site, a professional archaeologist will be onsite monitoring the construction during the entire excavation period of the asphalt pad and creation of the back dune swale. The asphalt pad will be removed with a jackhammer or by hand; no heavy equipment will be used. The sand that is removed from the back dune swale creation site will be spread over the cultural site. After appropriate documentation has occurred, the site will be covered with sand native to the site and revegetated with native plants. If any unanticipated archaeological artifacts are uncovered during excavation, such work will be stopped immediately, and a qualified archaeologist (not affiliated with UCSB) will be consulted to assess the nature, extent, and possible significance of the artifacts. Their ultimate disposition will be based on the opinion of the qualified archaeologist and will include consultation with an authorized Chumash representative. If human remains are discovered, all work will be stopped immediately and the County Coroner shall be notified within 48 hours. There will be no further disturbance to the site where the remains were found. If the remains are Native American, the coroner is responsible for contacting the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours. The Commission will immediately notify those persons it believes to be most likely to be descended from the deceased Native American. A monitoring report documenting the findings and results of the project will

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be completed by the archaeologist and submitted to Central Coast Information Center upon completion of the monitoring period and all associated activities. Implementation of these actions would reduce the potential impacts to less than significant with mitigation. The immediate accessway site contains no known cultural resources therefore, unless new archeological sites are discovered, these potential impacts are not relevant to the project.

Biological Resources

The project could result in a substantial adverse effect to sensitive plant species and habitat as a result of revegetation and public access enhancement activities at Campus Point. Minor ground disturbance and vegetation removal required for stairway construction could cause erosion and sedimentation into the Campus Lagoon. At the same time, however, habitats which could potentially support sensitive plant and wildlife species would be restored and enhanced. Special-status plant species known to exist in the area would be included in the planned plant palettes for restoration efforts. Existing sensitive plant species such as red-sand verbena (*Abronia maritima*) would be preserved. The installation of stairs at Campus Point, revegetation activities, and proposed trail closures are expected to rehabilitate eroded slopes and prevent further erosion from occurring though some erosion could potentially occur during installation of stairway footings. To minimize any potential harm due to habitat disturbance, all known locations of sensitive species will be flagged and surveys will be conducted prior to any disturbance activities in order to locate other potential sites. Grantee will ensure that the mitigation measures are shown in bid documents and on plans, and that a survey is performed and compliance with survey results is met. To address the potential for erosion, specific erosion control practices will be implemented. These actions would reduce impacts to biological resources to less than significant with mitigation.

Geology and Soils

The installation of stairs at Campus Point, revegetation activities, and proposed trail closures are expected to rehabilitate eroded slopes and prevent further erosion from occurring. However, minor ground disturbance and vegetation removal required for stairway construction could cause erosion and sedimentation into the Campus Lagoon. To avoid substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil, construction will occur during the dry season. Specific grading and erosion control practices will be included in the proposed project's erosion control plan and will be implemented at the project site for the entire duration of construction. These measures include preparation of a site-specific erosion control and landscape plan, installation of sediment control measures before construction, limiting exposed soil to construction area, and protecting exposed areas during construction. Grantee will ensure that: requirements and erosion control measures are shown in design plans and contract documents prior to construction; conditions are adhered to prior to site preparation and demolition; and monitoring is conducted during the entire length of construction to ensure best management practices are in place and are effective. These actions would reduce impacts to geology and soils to less than significant with mitigation.

Hydrology and Water Quality

The project could potentially result in substantial adverse effect to water quality. Displacement of soil for the Campus Point stairway could lead to erosion in the short-term that may introduce sediment into the lagoon. Construction vehicles leaking oil or other fluids, or heavy machinery that is accidentally overturned, and concrete washouts could result in spillage of petrochemicals

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and other materials that could adversely impact water quality in the lagoon and or the ocean. An erosion and drainage control plan will minimize the movement of surface water and associated sediment to prevent erosion and siltation into Campus Lagoon and the ocean. Equipment and fluid staging areas will be located at least 100 feet from the lagoon. Spill containment kits will be located in the equipment staging storage areas, sediment spoils and dewatering areas will be located in upland areas well away from the lagoon and stands of native vegetation, and concrete washout areas will be located in a designated containment area. These actions would reduce impacts to hydrology and water quality to less than significant with mitigation.

Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change

After UCSB approved the MND in 2008, the Natural Resources Agency issued new CEQA Guidelines (Code of Regulations) to guide the assessment of the environmental impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15064.4 instructs agencies about their options for determining the significance of greenhouse gas emissions. In accordance with this guidance, Conservancy staff have qualitatively analyzed the project to assess the significance of its greenhouse gas emissions, and conclude that this impact is less-than-significant. This new analysis does not require the preparation of a subsequent MND because it does not reveal the presence of new significant effects, nor does this new analysis trigger any of the other standards established in 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15162.

The Conservancy staff's assessment of this project's greenhouse gas emissions impact is based on the following facts. The project will emit some quantity of greenhouse gases during the construction phase, but will not require the use of electricity or otherwise cause impacts during the operational stage. Thus, the project's greenhouse gas emissions will derive only from construction equipment, the lifecycle emissions of the construction materials, and vehicle miles traveled for construction purposes. The project incorporates a variety of best management practices to reduce this impact. First, the project was designed to incorporate recycled materials. The stairway will be constructed from recycled plastic "wood" decking, thereby intercepting the waste stream for a productive use. This product is at least 12% post-consumer plastic, involves the use of waste sawdust from other wood manufacturing businesses and results in no timber cutting for construction. Second, the use of local contractors and materials will reduce vehicle miles traveled. Although construction will involve the use of cement and drilled caisson holes, UCSB requires that all cement be derived from local sources. According to the grantee, it is unlikely that the contractor would come from further away than Santa Maria, based on UCSB records of suitable contractors and records of bidders on projects. In addition the stairway materials are distributed in California by Capital Lumber and available locally in businesses such as Channel City Lumber. Finally, construction will largely avoid the use of heavy machinery. The only machinery on site will be the drill rig for drilling the caisson holes. The rest of the labor will be manual labor on site by local contractors. In summary, the project does not have the potential to contribute to a significant project-specific or cumulative impact of greenhouse gas emissions.

Upon an independent review of the MND, Conservancy staff concurs with UCSB that the proposed project, as mitigated, will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

Upon Conservancy approval, staff will file a Notice of Determination for this project.