

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
October 21, 2010

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

Project No. 08-023-02
Project Manager: Melanie Denninger

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$420,000 to the San Francisco Parks Trust to conduct conservation planning in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, including outreach and coordination among Bay Area land conservation entities, with all activities to be undertaken through the Bay Area Open Space Council.

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

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Letters](#)

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 disbursement of an amount not to exceed \$420,000 (four hundred twenty thousand dollars) to the San Francisco Parks Trust (the “Trust”) to assist with development and implementation of the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project; provide training in addressing the Conservancy’s climate change criteria for project consideration; update the Bay Area Protected Areas Database; expand the Transit and Trails web-based tool; provide public information on the Upland Habitat Goals and their implementation; identify and develop non-traditional funding sources for Bay Area open space stewardship; and undertake activities--such as conducting workshops and informational meetings and training--to further the natural resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco

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Bay Area Conservancy Program, with all activities to be undertaken through the Bay Area Open Space Council (the “Council”). Prior to the commencement of work and the disbursement of funds, the Trust and the Council shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a detailed work program, schedule and budget and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out 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 authorization is consistent with the purposes and criteria of Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding (Sections 31160-31165) regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
3. The San Francisco Parks Trust 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.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to \$420,000 to the San Francisco Parks Trust (the “Trust”) to assist with development and implementation of the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project; provide training in meeting the Conservancy’s climate change criteria for project selection; update the Bay Area Protected Areas Database; expand the Transit and Trails web-based tool; publicize the Upland Habitat Goals (“UHG) and their implementation; identify and develop non-traditional funding sources for Bay Area open space stewardship; and undertake activities--such as conducting workshops, informational meetings, and training--to further the natural resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. The Trust will administer this project through the Bay Area Open Space Council (the “Council”), the members of which include over 50 Bay Area non-profit conservation organizations and public land management agencies throughout the Bay Area, will work with a broad array of additional organizations within and beyond the conservation community to accomplish the project objectives.

More specifically, the projects and programs proposed for funding under this grant include the following:

1. Assist with development and implementation of the Bay Area Critical Linkages Project
 - A. In cooperation with the project manager, Science and Collaboration for Connected Wildlands (“SC Wildlands”), which is working under a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, undertake multiple tasks to contribute to preparation of a comprehensive action plan for critical habitat linkages in the Bay Area that includes

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focal-species-based linkage designs, implementation strategies, and a monitoring framework for the region.

- B. In cooperation with SC Wildlands, develop conceptual area protection plans for each linkage design area, prepare and implement a communications plan and strategy for a media launch, and implement outreach to public agencies and private organizations that will implement the linkages measures.
2. Disseminate information regarding the Conservancy's climate change grant criteria through a workshop provided for Council members and other interested parties and posts to the Council website.
 3. Update the Bay Area Protected Areas Database (BAPAD), a descriptive and quantitative tool now relied upon by the Bay Program and many other federal, State, regional and local organizations to select and track land protection projects and to inform regional plans, such as UHG and Critical Linkages.
 4. Update and improve the Transit and Trails (TNT) website, an on-line guide for using public transportation to travel to Bay Area parks and open space.
 - A. Add Americans with Disabilities Act and bicycling data to the TNT guide.
 - B. Refine the TNT website to be usable on mobile electronic devices.
 - C. Explore and possibly implement other website features to improve its usefulness and attractiveness.
 5. In cooperation with the magazine Bay Nature, publicize the Upland Habitat Goals project and its implementation.
 6. Identify and develop non-traditional funding sources for Bay Area open space stewardship.
 7. To further the natural resource and recreation objectives of the Bay Program, undertake activities such as conducting workshops, informational meetings, and training.

This project is a priority for the Conservancy, as it greatly expands the ability of the Conservancy's Bay Program staff to implement the directive to the Conservancy in Section 4.5 of its enabling legislation (Public Resources Code Div. 21) to "participate in and support interagency actions and public/private partnerships in the San Francisco Bay area for purpose of...[identifying and adopting long-term resource and outdoor recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay area], and providing for broad-based local involvement in, and support for, the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program."

The proposed grantee, the San Francisco Parks Trust, is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1971. Its purposes include the encouragement and appreciation of parks and open space and related activities. The Trust has successfully administered two previous Conservancy grants. The Council, through which the Trust would be carrying out the proposed project, has now successfully carried out several Conservancy grants over a period of 10 years. Since the Council itself is neither a public agency nor a private nonprofit organization, it has carried out each grant project in cooperation with a qualified nonprofit which is an eligible

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grantee and which administers the grant funds for work carried out by the Council. Additional administrative background is provided below in “Project History.”

Project History: The Council has played a unique role in the history of the Conservancy’s 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 up-to-date on challenges and opportunities around the Bay Area. Additional Council accomplishments include preparation of the Upland Habitat Goals project, the first science-based regional process for conservation planning in the Bay Area; development of a web-based tool for finding public transportation to Bay Area parks and open space; convening bi-monthly membership meetings to address common issues and opportunities; and convening an annual parks and open space conference.

As the Council is a membership-based organization which is not incorporated, the Conservancy helped fund its projects until recently through Greenbelt Alliance (“Greenbelt”), which is a private non-profit organization. Past grants to Greenbelt for purposes of assisting the Council total approximately \$1.86 million, with roughly an equal amount of matching funds provided by foundations and public agencies. In 2009, at the request of both Greenbelt and the Council, Greenbelt was replaced by the Parks Trust as the grantee with respect to the Conservancy grant then in effect and for subsequent grants to carry out the purposes of the Council.

PROJECT FINANCING

	<u>FY10/11</u>	<u>FY11/11</u>
Coastal Conservancy	\$210,000	\$210,000
Additional Anticipated Contributions		
Membership	\$ 31,500	\$ 31,500
Individual Donors	32,500	10,000
Corporate Donors	35,000	35,000
Foundation funding	316,406	100,000
Registration fees	32,000	32,000
Federal Grants	98,500	0
Fee-for-service contracts	78,000	50,000
Total Anticipated Project Funding	\$833,906	\$468,500

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the fiscal year 09/10 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

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Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Under section 75060, this funding source may be used for the protection of bays and coastal waters and watersheds, including projects to protect and restore the natural habitat values of coastal waters and lands and projects and expenditures to promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state, pursuant to the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. Proposition 84 funds may also be used for broad-based planning "necessary for the successful design, selection, and implementation of the projects authorized under" Proposition 84 (see section 75072). Consistent with Section 75060, the proposed authorization is to be used to plan for and assist projects intended to protect the natural habitat values of the San Francisco Bay and its 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.

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.

Under Section 31162, the Conservancy may award grants within the Bay Area that achieve the following goals: (a) improve public access to, within and around the San Francisco Bay, coast, ridgetops, and urban open spaces; (b) protect natural habitats and connecting corridors; (c) assist in the implementation of the adopted plans of local governments and districts; and (d) promote and assist projects that will provide open space and natural areas accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes. The proposed authorization will provide funding that will assist in the planning and implementation by BAOSC of projects within the Bay Area that achieve exactly these objectives.

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 (s), 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, training, 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 2007
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

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Consistent with **Goal 9, Objective 9A** 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 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 Council, supported by the Trust, comprises more than 50 public agencies and nonprofit land conservation organizations. Letter of support are included in Exhibit 1.
4. **Location:** The proposed project addresses land conservation needs and opportunities in the entire nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.
5. **Need:** Without the Conservancy's financial support, the Council would not be able to provide important services and work products for the Critical Linkages Project, assist its members and the Conservancy by providing a workshop on the Conservancy's climate change criteria for grant projects, maintain and update the BAPAD or TNT website, analyze and develop non-traditional funding sources for Bay Area land conservation, or develop a magazine article to augment outreach for UHG. It would be difficult for the Council to keep in place the regional networks and relationships which make it possible to respond effectively to land conservation issues and to support the purposes of the Bay Program.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed project has a regional scope, addressing land conservation needs in all nine Bay Area counties.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** Projects developed under this authorization will consider vulnerability to future sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

10. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
12. **Innovation:** Innovation is inherent in several of the activities proposed to be undertaken as part of this project: a) developing and implementing the Critical Linkages Project, which uses the new habitat conservation tool of determining movement corridors needed for the survival of representative species, b) making improvements to the unique Transit and Trails on-line tool which provides detailed information about using public transportation to reach Bay Area parks and open space, c) instructing Council members and others in use of the

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Conservancy's innovative climate change criteria for project selection; d) and seeking to identify, analyze and develop non-traditional funding for land conservation and stewardship.

13. **Readiness:** The Trust and the Council have demonstrated through their previous work funded by the Conservancy that they will be able to conduct the proposed project in a timely manner. Both organizations have staff experienced with carrying out the work that will be required of them.
16. **Cooperation:** The Council builds cooperation among federal, State, regional and local agencies and private nonprofit organizations as a primary focus of its mission.
17. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** While the proposed project does not entail physical improvements that could be vulnerable to climate change impacts, two of the project tasks entail planning for climate change. First, the Critical Linkages Project will incorporate the best science available to factor climate change into the design of habitat linkages. Second, the Council will disseminate information regarding the Conservancy's climate change grant criteria through a workshop provided for Council members and other interested parties and posts to the Council website.

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. All of the activities that would be undertaken for this project are properly characterized as feasibility and planning.

Upon authorization, staff will file a Notice of Exemption.