

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 29, 2016

UPPER DEVEREUX SLOUGH RESTORATION

Project No.11-019-04
Project Manager: Rachel Couch

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,053,126 to the Regents of the University of California to augment a Conservancy grant of \$1,672,463, authorized on May 26, 2016, for restoration of wetlands and connected uplands at Upper Devereux Slough, Santa Barbara County.

LOCATION: Devereux Slough, unincorporated Santa Barbara County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [May 26, 2016 Staff Recommendation](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby augments its May 26, 2016 authorization by authorizing disbursement of up to an additional one million fifty-three thousand one hundred twenty-six dollars (\$1,053,126) to the Regents of the University of California, Santa Barbara campus (“UCSB”) to undertake restoration of wetlands and connected uplands in Devereux Slough, subject to the same conditions imposed by the Conservancy authorization of May 26, 2016.”

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 authorization remains consistent with Chapter 6 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding enhancement of coastal resources.
 2. The proposed project remains consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends augmenting a grant to UCSB, previously authorized by the Coastal Conservancy at its May 26, 2016 meeting, for the restoration of upper Devereux Slough. The Conservancy’s May 2016 action authorized disbursement of \$1,672,463 of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funds for the project. Staff is now recommending that the Conservancy authorize an additional \$1,053,126 of Conservancy Proposition 1 funds.

The full restoration plan for the Upper Devereux Slough encompasses 136 acres of tidal and freshwater wetlands and connected uplands. UCSB developed a strategy to implement the restoration in phases, if necessary, while simultaneously working to secure funding for the whole project. With the recommended Conservancy funding and other recently awarded grants, UCSB would now have sufficient funding to allow construction to commence on the full restoration project. Restoration of Upper Devereux Slough will restore and enhance both wetland and upland habitats, and will also expand the tidal area of Devereux Slough, providing adaptation space for salt marsh habitats that could potentially be lost in the face of sea level rise. The project is slated to begin in October 2016. See the May 2016 Staff Recommendation (Exhibit 2) for additional information.

Site Description: See Exhibit 2.

Project History: See Exhibit 2

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy

Proposed Conservancy Augmentation	\$1,053,126
Previous Conservancy Authorization	\$1,672,463
CNRA – Urban Greening	\$960,000
CDFW – GHG Sequestration	\$900,000
CDFW – Proposition 1	\$1,000,000
DWR – Urban Streams	\$930,000
County Flood Control	\$100,000
CalTrans Active Transportation Program	\$2,449,000
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$3,820,000
UCSB	\$500,000
Ocean Protection Council	\$1,000,000
Project Total	\$14,384,589

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for the proposed augmentation is an appropriation from the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1, Water Code § 79700 et seq.). Funds appropriated to the Conservancy derive from Chapter 6

(commencing with § 79730) and may be used “for multi-benefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state” (Section 79731). Section 79732(a) identifies specific purposes of Chapter 6, including to: protect and restore aquatic, wetland, and migratory bird ecosystems including fish and wildlife corridors; protect and restore coastal watersheds, including, but not limited to bays, marine estuaries, and nearshore ecosystems; and assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened or migratory species by improving watershed health, instream flows, fish passage and coastal or inland wetland restoration. Consistent with this provision, the project will restore a coastal wetland ecosystem that provides habitat for several species of concern as well as migratory birds. In addition, the project will reduce flooding from storm events that are expected to increase in frequency with climate change and will provide space for habitat shifts due to increased sea levels

As required by Proposition 1, the proposed project provides multiple benefits. By facilitating restoration of wetland habitat in the Devereux Slough, the project will expand ecosystem function and benefit aquatic and avian species that utilize estuarine habitat and improve water quality. The project will also further climate change adaptation by reducing flooding and improve water quality. Public access improvements are also incorporated into the restoration design.

In accordance with Section 79707(b) which requires agencies to prioritize “projects that leverage private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit”, this project leverages federal contributions described in the “Project Financing” section. In addition, UCSB is providing cash and staff time to the overall project.

The project was selected through a competitive grant process under the Conservancy’s *Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines* adopted in June 2015 (“Prop 1 Guidelines”). See Section 79706(a). The proposed project meets each of the evaluation criteria in the Prop 1 Guidelines as described in further detail in this “Project Financing” section and the May 26, 2016 staff recommendation.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation as described in the May 26, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2013 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), AS REVISED JUNE 25, 2015:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives as described in the May 26, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines as described in the May 26, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Local Coastal Program Policies as described in the May 26, 2016 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed authorization seeks an augmentation of funding only and involves no changes to the project as it was described in the May 26, 2016 staff recommendation. Therefore, the proposed project involves no new environmental effects and no need for new mitigation measures and does not require any further environmental documentation or additional findings under CEQA beyond the documentation described in the May 16, 2016 staff recommendation and the findings made by the Conservancy at its May 16, 2016 meeting (Exhibit 2).