

COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
Staff Recommendation  
September 6, 2018

**ISLAIS CREEK ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS AND COPRA CRANE RESTORATION**

Project No.: 12-049-01  
Project Manager: Avra Heller

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Modification of the grant authorized by the Conservancy on December 6, 2012 to allow the Port of San Francisco to, in-lieu of preparing designs for restoration of the Copra Crane, develop and install an interpretive program that will display public information on the Copra Crane and the related natural and cultural history of Islais Creek, San Francisco, with no amendment to the grant amount or the project's scope of work regarding the removal of creosote piers and pilings.

**LOCATION:** San Francisco, San Francisco County

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program

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**EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit 1: [December 6, 2012 Staff Recommendation](#)  
Exhibit 2: [Copra Crane Restoration Cost Estimates](#)  
Exhibit 3: [BCDC Letter of Approval](#)  
Exhibit 4: [Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31000 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby approves modifying the grant to the Port of San Francisco authorized on December 6, 2012, by amending the scope of the project to delete preparation of design plans for the restoration of the Copra Crane at Islais Creek, San Francisco, and to add the development and installation of an interpretive program at Islais Creek that will display public information on the Copra Crane and the related natural and cultural history of the area, with no changes to the total authorized disbursement amount of \$616,534 and the other project element involving creosote pilings removal, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the Port of San Francisco shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:

- a. A final work program, schedule and budget, including the updated scope of work for development and installation of the interpretive program.
  - b. The names, qualifications, and bid documents of contractors the Port intends to hire to implement the project.
  - c. A plan for acknowledging Conservancy and BCDC funding that includes provisions for displaying the logos of both agencies in a manner approved by the Executive Officer.
3. Prior to initiating construction, the Port of San Francisco shall provide written evidence to the Executive Officer that all permits and approvals necessary to the implementation and completion of the project under applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations have been obtained
  4. Prior to construction of interpretive panels, the Port of San Francisco shall enter into agreements with the owners of the project site (either or both of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission) to allow the Port to implement, manage and maintain 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 project’s conditions from the December 6, 2012 staff recommendation regarding creosote piers and pilings remain unchanged.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with Public Resources Code Sections 31160 *et seq.*, regarding the Conservancy’s mandate to address the resource goals of the San Francisco Bay Area.
3. The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
4. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, the *Mitigated Negative Declaration: Port Prop A Open Space Improvements* adopted by the City of San Francisco’s Planning Department on October 30, 2009, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 3. The Conservancy finds that the design and installation of the proposed interpretive program, as mitigated, avoids, reduces, or mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects of the program to a less-than-significant level and that there is no substantial evidence based on the record as a whole that the interpretive program, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment.”

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

On December 6, 2012, the Conservancy authorized a disbursement of \$616,534 of San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) permit mitigation fees to the Port of San Francisco (Port) for the Islais Creek Access Improvements and Copra Crane Restoration project, which consisted of two elements: (1) the removal of creosote pilings at Islais Creek, and (2) the completion of planning and design work to restore the Copra Crane at Islais Creek. The Port would now like to change the scope of the project by deleting the second element (preparation of design plans for the Copra Crane) and adding the planning and installation of an interpretive program along Islais Creek highlighting the historical importance of the Copra Crane. This change is in keeping with the December 6, 2012 authorization's intent to "enable the Port of San Francisco to improve public access to San Francisco Bay at Islais Creek and provide for historic interpretation about labor history on San Francisco's southeast waterfront (Exhibit 1, pg. 2)." Further history of the significance of the Copra Crane can be found in the December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1).

In 2016, the Port completed preliminary design plans for the Copra Crane but did not draw on the Conservancy-granted funds for the majority of that work (only \$6,663 of the \$616,534 total authorization has been spent to-date). Those plans returned estimated crane restoration costs in excess of \$1.4 million (Exhibit 2). This high cost was due in part to the fact that the crane had to be dismantled due to safety concerns, and is currently in storage in six separate pieces. The Port determined, upon considering these factors, that pursuing the restoration would not be the best use of public funds. The Port worked with the Copra-Crane Labor Landmark Association, the nonprofit organization primarily driving the Copra Crane's planned restoration, to develop this proposed change of scope.

The proposed project as revised will continue to include the first element of the project: removal of creosote piles and decking west of the Third Street Bridge, as originally contemplated and discussed in the staff recommendation from December 6, 2012. However, instead of funding the planning and design work needed to restore the Copra Crane, Conservancy funding will be used to design and install an interpretive program along Islais Creek, which will display public information on the Copra Crane and the related natural, cultural and labor history of the creek. The Port expects the interpretive program to have about twenty different elements, including, where feasible, physical pieces of the Copra Crane. The interpretive program will generally consist of signs and display installations along existing walkways and trails. The Port owns most of the area where the interpretive program will be installed; however, SFMTA and SFPUC also have jurisdiction over some properties along Islais Creek. Once the layout of the interpretive program has been determined, the Port will enter, as needed, into agreements with SFMTA and SFPUC to ensure successful implementation and maintenance of the interpretive program.

**Site Description:** See Exhibit 1

**Grantee Qualifications:** See Exhibit 1

**Project History:** On December 6, 2012, the Conservancy authorized a disbursement of up to \$616,534 to the Port of San Francisco to improve the southeast San Francisco waterfront access. Specifically, the project included removing creosote-treated pilings at Islais Creek and designing plans for the renovation of the Copra Crane at Pier 84 as a waterfront labor history landmark (Exhibit 1). The project, as previously and currently contemplated, enables the Port of San Francisco to improve public access to San Francisco Bay at Islais Creek and provide for historic interpretation about labor history on San Francisco’s southeast waterfront, which includes the history of the Copra Crane. Further history of the project can be found in the December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1).

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	\$616,534
Port of San Francisco	\$332,000
The Copra Crane Labor Landmark Association	\$35,000
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$983,534</b>

The funding for the proposed project, as previously authorized on December 6, 2012, is derived from funds received by the Conservancy from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and West Coast Recycling Company (WCRC). These mitigation funds were required under two permits issued by BCDC to SFPUC (permit Nos. M74-62 and M85-11), and one permit issued by BCDC to WCRC and the Port (permit No. M01-40). The SFPUC permits were for constructing a sewage pumping station, a sewage force main, and an underground concrete sewer structure in the area of Channel and Seventh Streets near Mission Creek Channel. The WCRC and Port permit was for completing improvements to an existing recycling facility of Pier 96 in San Francisco. These mitigation funds were set aside to be used to improve public access along Islais Creek.

The Conservancy accepted these mitigation fees pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Conservancy and BCDC, which requires that the Conservancy obtain BCDC’s approval of each selected mitigation project. BCDC approved this change of scope to the project in a letter dated May 23, 2018 (Exhibit 3) in which BCDC indicated that the proposed change sufficiently fulfills the purposes of the mitigation funds required under the permits discussed above.

The only change in funding since the December 6, 2012 authorization, is that the Port will be providing an additional \$131,831 in matching funds to the \$200,169 they committed to in the prior authorization, bringing their total match to \$332,000, and the project total up to \$983,534. No changes are made to the Conservancy or Landmark Association’s funding amounts. See December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1) for further details. As referenced above, please see Exhibit 3 for BCDC’s approval of this change in project scope.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed project as revised remains consistent with the requirements of Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31164, as discussed at length in Exhibit 1. The revised project is consistent with Section 31162(a), in that an interpretive program on the historical and cultural aspects of the Copra Crane at Islais Creek will improve public access by improving the waterfront adjacent to the San Francisco Bay and Water Trails; and pursuant to Section 31162(d), the revised project will enhance the educational aspect of existing public access to open space and natural areas for the urban population of San Francisco.

Section 31163(a) states that the Conservancy shall “cooperate with cities, counties, and districts, the bay commission, other regional governmental bodies, nonprofit land trusts, nonprofit landowner organizations, and other interested parties in identifying and adopting long-term resource and outdoor recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay Area, which shall guide the ongoing activities of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.” Consistent with Section 31163(a), the proposed project as revised will complete and design improvements for public access on the San Francisco Bay waterfront, goals identified in The Association of Bay Area Governments *The Bay Trail Plan*, 2) *The Enhanced San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan* , and 3) the Port of San Francisco’s *Waterfront Land Use Plan*.

The proposed project as revised satisfies all of the criteria for determining project priorities under Section 31163(c) in that:

- 1) The proposed project as revised is consistent with approved plans including: BCDC’s *San Francisco Bay Plan (amended October 2011)*, BCDC’s *Special Area Plan*, and the Port of San Francisco’s *Waterfront Land Use Plan* and *Blue Greenway Project*;
- 2) The proposed project as revised serves a regional constituency by enhancing public access in Islais Creek and Pier 84 and by supporting the larger efforts outlined in the Blue Greenway Project to enhance the San Francisco Bay Trail and San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail on the southeast San Francisco waterfront;
- 3) The proposed project as revised can be implemented in a timely way as the Port of San Francisco is prepared to begin work upon project approval;
- 4) The improvement of public access at Islais Creek and Pier 84 provides an opportunity for public access that could be lost without this funding; and
- 5) The proposed project as revised includes significant matching funds from the Port of San Francisco and the Copra Crane Labor Landmark Association.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN  
GOALS & OBJECTIVES:**

The proposed project remains consistent with goals and objectives of the Conservancy’s previous Strategic Plan, as described in the December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1). The proposed project as revised is also consistent with the current plan’s **Goal 3, Objective B**, to implement waterfront revitalization projects that promote excellence in urban design and

enhance cultural resources, as well as **Goal 13, Objective B**, which addresses implementation projects providing public recreational facilities including interpretive signage.

**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 December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1). This project as revised is additionally consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on October 2, 2014, in the following respects:

**Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:**

*California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report* – This project promotes the Steward and Protect Natural and Working Landscapes Goal by prioritizing watershed protection through improving bay water quality through the removal of creosote pilings and a dilapidated creosote pier.

*San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Report* (2010, jointly authored by the State Coastal Conservancy, California Ocean Protection Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and San Francisco Estuary Partnership), which is a 50-year Conservation Plan for submerged habitats in San Francisco Bay and which recommends the removal of derelict piling structures in San Francisco Bay.

**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 as revised enjoys support from the public and BCDC.
4. **Location:** The proposed project as revised is located on the southeast San Francisco Bay waterfront at Islais Creek in the City and County of San Francisco.
5. **Need:** The project's previous scope provided funding for planning and design for the restoration and interpretation of the Copra Crane. As discussed above, full restoration of the Crane is no longer feasible, and it is therefore a project need to come up with an alternative that meets the same priorities of preserving and communicating the labor history of Islais Creek. Without this funding the Port of San Francisco would be unable to install an interpretive program along Islais Creek that meets those criteria.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The installation of an interpretive program highlighting the Copra Crane will offer the public a unique landmark for the interpretation of waterfront labor history and the cultural and natural importance of the Islais Creek watershed. The project is

located along two regional trails, the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Bay Area Water Trail, and will benefit visitors to the trails and the area's Blue Greenway Project.

7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The interpretive program's design and installation will take into consideration projected future sea level rise, and the program will be installed in a way to limit its vulnerability.

### **Additional Criteria**

8. **Urgency:** The proposed project as revised is part of a larger effort to improve the southeast waterfront in San Francisco Bay where pollution and contamination from historic uses continue to negatively impact Bay water quality, and opportunities for public access. The installation of an interpretive program along Islais Creek will help to enhance public access in a highly urbanized community, and preserve the value of the Copra Crane as a landmark while also highlighting the natural values of Islais Creek.
9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
10. **Innovation:** The project will enable innovative reuse of a historic crane to become a waterfront interpretive program promoting public appreciation for San Francisco Bay, the Islais Creek watershed and shoreline labor history.
11. **Readiness:** The Port of San Francisco is ready to complete the proposed activities upon approval of the proposed project as revised.
12. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See "Project History" above."
13. **Cooperation:** The proposed project as revised involves collaboration between a local nonprofit organization, the Port of San Francisco, the Conservancy and BCDC, using mitigation funds specifically identified for public access improvements along Islais Creek.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the San Francisco Bay Plan as described in December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1).

### **CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

CEQA findings for the removal of creosote pilings and wharf remain those described in the December 6, 2012 staff recommendation (Exhibit 1). There have been no changes or new information regarding this component of the project that trigger the need for additional CEQA review of the project pursuant to 14 Cal. Code Regs. Section 15162. Accordingly, no further environmental review for the removal of the creosote pilings and wharf.

On October 30, 2009, the San Francisco Planning Department adopted the *Mitigated Negative Declaration: Port Prop A Open Space Improvements* (MND), attached as Exhibit 4-1 and Exhibit 4-2, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The MND provides

a comprehensive environmental assessment of a number of specified waterfront open space projects to be implemented by the Port which were eligible for funding under San Francisco Proposition A. MND. The MND includes consideration of the Blue Greenway Improvements for public access along the Bay Trail in the South Eastern area of San Francisco running from China Basin Chanel to SF County Line, including along Islais Creek. The Blue Greenway Improvements include all public parkway development in Islais Creek. The proposed project will provide public access amenities along Islais Creek and can be considered part of the Blue Greenway Improvements for purposes of the MND.

The document finds that while “Blue Greenway” improvements are expected to increase pedestrian and cyclist use of the San Francisco Bay Trail (pg. 36), the improvements are not expected to generate an increase in automobile trips. (pg. 34) Overall the project’s impact on transportation and circulation would be “less than significant” (pg. 30).

The Port believes the interpretive program will be installed over a maximum total project footprint of about 300 square feet. Installation may lead to minor construction impacts involving the removal of cement, potential small disturbance of sediments and potential noise impacts. The only impact that might require mitigation is construction noise generated by pile-driving work. If any piles are required for the installation of this interpretive program the below mitigations measures will be employed:

Mitigation Measure M-NO-1: Pile-driving Construction. The project sponsor shall require construction contractors to use noise-reducing pile driving techniques such as installing intake and exhaust mufflers on pile driving equipment, vibrating piles into place where feasible, and installing shrouds around the pile driving hammer where feasible. (pg. 43)

Improvement Measure I-NO-1: Pile-driving Construction. Prior to the start of pile driving activity, the Port would work with its construction contractors to notify and meet with neighboring property owners/businesses within 300 feet of the project site at least one month in advance, to inform them of dates, hours and duration of the pile-driving work so that these parties can plan their activities accordingly. (pg. 43)

Staff has independently reviewed the MND and concurs with the Port that the proposed interpretive program, as mitigated, will not have significant adverse effects on the environment. Therefore, staff recommends that the Conservancy find that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined by 14 Cal. Code Regs. §15382.

Staff will file a Notice of Determination upon the Conservancy’s approval of the project.