

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
August 22, 2019

BOLSA CHICA ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTIFACTS PROJECT

Project No. 18-016-01
Project Manager: Greg Gauthier

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$80,000 to the Montebello Unified School District to produce three sets of three-dimensionally printed reproductions of 237 archaeological artifacts unearthed on the Bolsa Chica Mesa in Orange County.

LOCATION: Bolsa Chica Mesa, City of Huntington Beach, County of Orange

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Environmental Education

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)
 - Exhibit 2: [Cogged Stones and Artifacts Images](#)
 - Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)
 - Exhibit 4: [Coastal Commission Documents](#)
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Section 31119 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an amount not to exceed eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) to the Montebello Unified School District (“the grantee”) to produce three sets of three-dimensionally printed reproductions of 237 archaeological artifacts unearthed on the Bolsa Chica Mesa in Orange County.

Prior to commencement of the project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
 2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
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3. Evidence that the grantee has entered into agreements sufficient to enable the grantee to implement 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 authorization is consistent with Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding educational projects and programs.
 2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.”
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PROJECT SUMMARY:

The proposed project will provide \$80,000 to the Montebello Unified School District (MUSD) to produce three sets of three-dimensionally printed reproductions of 237 archaeological artifacts unearthed on the Bolsa Chica Mesa in Orange County. The artifacts were excavated from two archaeological sites, CA-ORA-83 and CA-ORA-86 (see site description below) and digital scans of the artifacts were taken by an archaeological firm involved in the excavation. The digital scans will be transferred to the Montebello Applied Technology Center, where students will reproduce the artifacts under the direction of school staff using the school’s existing three-dimensional printing technology. Students also will learn about the cultural significance of the chosen artifacts and methods and importance of protection and preservation of archaeological sites, features, and artifacts.

The artifact reproductions and digital data used to produce the artifact reproductions will be given to the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation and the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, historically known as the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, both of which have ancestral interest in this material and were determined to be the Most Likely Descendants by the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). Most Likely Descendants are persons designated by the NAHC pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 as most likely to be descended from the Native American inhabitants of a particular area, in this case the Bolsa Chica Mesa.

Cultural resources comprise a valuable coastal resource for Californians and for Native American tribes in particular. The artifacts to be reproduced were unearthed during unpermitted subsurface excavations in preparation for construction of a housing development on the Bolsa Chica Mesa. The three sets of reproductions will allow reburial of the artifacts in question, per the affiliated tribes’ preference, while providing replicas for ceremonial and educational use by the Juaneño and Gabrielino-Tongva tribes.

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Site Description: There are two properties from which the subject artifacts of this proposed project were removed, together comprising approximately 11.2 acres of land. The properties are located southeast of the intersection of Los Patos Avenue and Bolsa Chica Street, Huntington Beach, which are identified by Orange County Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 110-016-35 and 110-016-18 (See Exhibit 1: Project Location Maps). The properties are owned by the Goodell Family Trust and real estate developer Signal Landmark.

The properties are located on the northeastern portion of the Bolsa Chica Mesa and contain a known archaeological site, CA-ORA-86. Archaeologists consider CA-ORA-86 to be the northeasterly continuation of another archaeological site located on the Bolsa Chica Mesa, the highly significant archaeological site CA-ORA-83. CA-ORA-83 is a 9,000-year-old archaeological site known as the Cogged Stone Site, due to the great number of cogged stone artifacts recovered there. CA-ORA-83 was placed on the California Register of Historic Places and successfully nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as representative of a ceremonial complex important to local Native American communities. CA-ORA-86 also contains significant artifacts and, as a component of ORA-83, has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as well.

The Cogged Stone Archaeological Site, CA-ORA-83, is a large prehistoric village site and cemetery situated on the upper bench of the Bolsa Chica Mesa overlooking the Bolsa Chica wetlands. As a result of years of archaeological research, much of which was performed pursuant to Coastal Development Permits, and some of which predated the Coastal Act, approximately 160 human burials and more than 100 significant archaeological features such as house pits, rock pits, hearths and tens of thousands of objects such as beads, charmstones, cogged stones and other artifacts have been found on CA-ORA-83. Cogged stones are cogged disc shaped artifacts that were made to be used in ceremonial practices. More cogged stones have been found at CA-ORA-83 than any other site – more than 500 or roughly half of the total found anywhere. The stones are thought to have been manufactured at the site and then distributed throughout coastal and near-coastal California. It also is believed that the CA-ORA-83 site served as a ceremonial center.

The proposed artifact reproduction will occur at the Montebello Applied Technology Center, a high school within the Montebello Unified School District. The school is located in the City of Montebello in the County of Los Angeles. The school has four educational pathways: architecture, construction management, and engineering; culinary, hospitality, and event management; health sciences; and public and legal services. The school has approximately 575 students. According to the U.S. News and World Report, 76 percent of the students are economically disadvantaged.

Grantee Qualifications: The Montebello Unified School District serves the City of Montebello and is the 35th-largest school district in the State of California. MUSD is located in Los Angeles County. The Applied Technology Center, whose students will conduct the three-dimensional printing of the artifact reproductions, is an MUSD high school serving students in grades nine

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through twelve. The students will work under the direction of the school's staff and its principal.

The school produced test artifact reproductions prior to the school's selection for the proposed project. The quality of work and use of students to complete the reproductions has been approved by the two tribes involved in the project.

Project History: In 2001 the State Historic Preservation Commission voted the Bolsa Chica Mesa Cogged Stone site, CA-ORA-83, a State Historic Site. The site was occupied from 9,000 to 2,000 years before present and takes its name from unique archaeological artifacts found on the site known as cogged stones. The artifacts and features found at the site are all that remain of a 9,000-year-old village, cemetery, and ceremonial site, which is the oldest Holocene-era prehistoric site in Orange County.

To date, at least 178 human bone concentrations representing an unknown number of individuals have been unearthed. Additionally, more than 100,000 artifacts including cogged stones, charm stones, beads, and discoids, as well as features such as semi-subterranean house pits have been excavated from the site (See Exhibit 2: Cogged Stones and Artifacts Images). There is no other such deposit of cogged stones of this magnitude anywhere in the world.

These archaeological artifacts and features were discovered during archaeological site surveys, surface collections, and subsurface excavations over the course of many years beginning in the 1920s and continuing to the present. The most recent discoveries on the two properties occurred pursuant to permitted surface surveys as well as unpermitted subsurface excavations, which damaged artifacts. The unpermitted actions, including grading and excavation within an area of known cultural and archaeological significance, resulted in the removal of the remnants of a dwelling structure, artifacts, and an intact cultural midden from the site. A cultural midden is an archaeological term for a trash heap. Middens contain concentrations of cultural artifacts including refuse, food remains, broken tools and crockery and can provide information on the lives and cultural practices of people who lived where the midden was formed. The Coastal Commission did not authorize, nor were they notified of these development activities, which resulted in disturbance of protected archaeological resources. These actions led to Consent Cease and Desist Orders and Consent Restoration Orders and a fine by the California Coastal Commission (See Exhibit 4: Coastal Commission Documents).

Through the execution of these Consent Orders, Signal Landmark and the Goodell Family Trust collectively agreed to: 1) perform no further unpermitted development on the properties; 2) restore, as necessary, the excavated areas; 3) in conjunction with representatives of the affected Native American tribal groups, specify final appropriate treatment of cultural materials removed from the properties as a result of the violation described above; 4) undertake a mitigation project on the properties to promote conservation of Native American cultural resources in coastal Orange County; and 5) pay a sum of \$600,000 into the Violation Remediation Account of the California Coastal Conservancy Fund.

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This proposed project constitutes one aspect of the third obligation to fulfill appropriate treatment of the cultural materials. As stated in the Project Summary section above, the three sets of reproductions will allow reburial of the artifacts in question, per the affiliated tribes' preference, while providing replicas for ceremonial and educational use by the Juaneño and Gabrielino-Tongva tribes.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$80,000
Project Total	\$80,000

The anticipated source of Conservancy funding for this project is a FY 2019/2020 appropriation from the Violation Remediation Account (VRA). Funds in the VRA originate from administrative orders and settlements as well as judicial actions arising from violations of the California Coastal Act, Public Resources Code Sections 30000, et seq. Funds in the VRA are available for carrying out the provisions of the Coastal Act, Public Resources Code Section 30823. The proposed project is consistent with the resource protection policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, in particular, Section 30244, which calls for the protection of archaeological and paleontological resources. The proposed project will produce replicas of coastal archaeological cultural artifacts that will enable reburial and preservation of the original artifacts.

VRA funds are expended pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the California Coastal Commission and the Conservancy, which requires that the Conservancy consult with Commission staff on proposed projects. Coastal Commission staff have reviewed the project and concur that it is an appropriate use of VRA funds.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 3, Section 31119 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, which authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to nonprofit organizations, public entities and educational institutions for educational projects, for kindergarten through grade 12, relating to preservation, protection, enhancement, and maintenance of coastal resources. The proposed project is an educational project for pupils in grades 9 to 12 relating to the protection and preservation of coastal resources in the form of archeological resources.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#)

GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 4, Objective 4A** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan regarding support for educational programs and interpretive events that improve understanding and promote stewardship of coastal resources, the proposed project will create a collection of

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reproduced artifacts to be used in tribal educational programs to promote stewardship of coastal cultural 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 October 2, 2014, 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. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** Coastal Act: The proposed project is consistent with Coastal Act Section 30244 regarding the protection of archaeological and paleontological resources.

City of Huntington Beach Local Coastal Plan: The proposed project is consistent with and supports the City of Huntington Beach LCP Policy C.5.1.2, which requires protection of historic and cultural resources.

4. **Support of the public:** The project is supported by the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, historically known as the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust (See Exhibit 3: Project Letters).
5. **Location:** The proposed project is directly derived from resources excavated within the coastal zone of the City of Huntington Beach in the County of Orange. The properties are located southeast of the intersection of Los Patos Avenue and Bolsa Chica Street, Huntington Beach, which are identified by Orange County Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 110-016-35 and 110-016-18.
6. **Need:** Without Conservancy funding this project will not happen and the educational opportunity to share knowledge, understanding and appreciation of these coastal cultural resources will be lost.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** Native American cultural resources are an integral component of California's coastal resources. It is in the interest of California's diverse residents, including native and non-native peoples, to protect and conserve these valuable resources.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The proposed project is limited to the reproduction of coastal cultural artifacts for educational purposes and is not subject to impacts from sea level rise.

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Additional Criteria

9. **Conflict resolution:** The proposed project constitutes one small step toward resolving the conflict of coastal development and preservation of coastal resources at the Bolsa Chica Mesa.
10. **Innovation:** The proposed project would utilize innovative three-dimensional printing technology to manufacture reproductions of Native American cultural artifacts. Furthermore, the opportunity for students to work on the project provides an innovative approach to learning and developing stewardship of California's historic coastal cultural resources.
11. **Readiness:** The Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Acjachemen Nation, the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, and the Montebello Applied Technology Center are ready to proceed immediately with the proposed project. The estimated time to project completion is 18 months to two years.
12. **Cooperation:** The proposed project would constitute a unique cooperative venture between two California Native American tribes, a high school utilizing students to complete the project work, the Conservancy, and the Coastal Commission.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project is statutorily exempt pursuant to Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Article 19 Categorical Exemptions, Section 15322, which states that a project involving only the adoption, alteration, or termination of educational or training programs that involve no physical alteration in the area affected or involve physical changes only in the interior of existing school or training structures does not require the preparation of an environmental document under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed project consists of manufacturing reproductions of cultural artifacts and does not involve any physical alteration of land, the environment, or structures. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption for the project.