

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
May 05, 2022

WHEELCHAIR RIDER'S ONLINE COASTAL GUIDE PHASE 3

Project No. 07-023-03
Project Manager: Taylor Samuelson

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP) to update and host Wheeling Cal's Coast, an online guide to wheelchair accessible parks and trails along the California coast and San Francisco Bay.

LOCATION: Statewide

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [March 29, 2012 Staff Recommendation](#)
Exhibit 2: [May 24, 2007 Staff Recommendation](#)
Exhibit 3: [Current Wheeling Cal's Coast Website](#)
-

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP) to update and host Wheeling Cal's Coast, an online guide to wheelchair accessible parks and trails along the California coast and San Francisco Bay.

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.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Public Resources Code Sections 31400-31409.
 2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
 3. BORP is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
-

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP) for the purpose of updating and hosting Wheeling Cal's Coast, a web-based guide to wheelchair accessible parks and trails along the California coast and San Francisco Bay.

The Wheeling Cal's Coast website provides detailed access information that has been collected by individuals that have both personal and professional experience with accessibility and that have physically visited each site thereby ensuring accurate information. There is an increasing number of parks, beaches, and trails that are accessible to people with disabilities. However, for a person with accessibility needs, finding relevant access information about coastal accessways through all the typical channels that are used for trip planning such as websites, apps, and brochures, is often an exhausting, futile effort. Before they can venture out on an unfamiliar trail, beach, or park, people with accessibility needs typically require detailed access information. Information such as the following often go unaddressed:

- Is there an accessible bathroom?
- Is there van accessible parking?
- Are beach wheelchairs available?
- What's the trail surface?

Answers to these questions are essential for planning an outing. Without advance knowledge of these specific access details, people with disabilities are deterred from engaging in meaningful coastal activities as well as any friends or family that might have joined them. This online user guide addresses a programmatic barrier that has been largely overlooked in the effort to provide physical access to the coast.

The website has been an invaluable resource, and the only one of its kind, where people with disability access needs can easily identify the location of accessible beaches, trails, and parks on the California coast. Unfortunately, in January of 2022, the website was hacked, and it is no longer accessible online. The proposed project will provide funding for BORP to restore and update the website. The data and functionality of the website has not been updated in ten years. To ensure the accuracy of the information on the site as well as accessibility across browsers, devices, and assistive technologies, it needs a redesign and platform upgrade. BORP

will transfer the website to a new server, update the website's design to WordPress, ensure compliance with WCAG 2.1 (web content accessibility guidelines), format the website to be read more easily on mobile devices, and update maps on the individual sites. BORP will host the online guide for at least three years.

The project will also fund updating content to ensure current information. As part of the project, BORP will also redesign the accessibility survey form that is used to collect data to be mobile-friendly and to function without an internet connection. With this, BORP will collect new wheelchair accessible trail information for all coastal counties.

Finally, BORP will conduct a social media campaign to promote the updated Wheeling Cal's Coast website.

Project History:

In May 2007, the Conservancy authorized funding to Access Northern California, a program of BORP, to prepare the Wheelchair Rider's Online Guide. The website was posted at www.wheelingcalscoast.org.

The website was initially created by incorporating previously published information for Orange and Los Angeles Counties, and for San Francisco Bay Counties, which were in an Adobe "pdf" format, into the website, which otherwise contained an interactive format for sites in other coastal counties. The source of the information for the "pdf" documentation for Orange and Los Angeles Counties was A Wheelchair Rider's Guide to Los Angeles and Orange County Coast, which was published by the Coastal Conservancy and Coastwalk in 2001. For San Francisco Bay the publication was A Wheelchair Rider's Guide - San Francisco Bay and the Nearby Coast, published by the Coastal Conservancy in 2006.

In March 2012, the Conservancy funded Access Northern California to gather and update the wheelchair accessibility information for Orange, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area Counties, add information about new coastal sites in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, and to incorporate this new information into the website. Since then, the content and format of the site has been largely untouched. Because the hosting platform is ancient in terms of web technology, making any updates to the content has been nearly impossible. The accuracy of the information on the site is essential to its function.

Grant Applicant Qualifications:

BORP has been a Conservancy grantee for many years, adeptly handling two previous grants for this project, as well as a number of Explore the Coast grants. They were the original proponents of the hard-copy Wheelchair Riders Guides as well as the subsequent web-based guide.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.

The proposed project will expand the system of coastal public accessways, open-space areas, parks, and inland trails that connect to the coast and improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs in and around San Francisco Bay, along the coast, the ridgelines, in urban open spaces, and natural areas in the sense that the information on the site enables people with accessibility needs to access and enjoy the coast.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

The proposed project is a much-needed update to an invaluable resource for people with disabilities. This will be the first content and platform update to the website in a decade and will make it more accurate and accessible. The cost includes the technical work to update the website and the effort of vetting and updating a substantial library of content. BORP will work with its existing partner network to update the information in a cost-effective and comprehensive manner.

3. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.

The purpose of the project is to update the website to current accessibility and security standards. The content will be updated on an ongoing basis throughout the project lifespan by BORP, its partners, and land managers – many of whom already proactively send content updates. Land managers, coastal visitors, and the public will be encouraged to contribute updates on an ongoing basis through the social media campaign. BORP will host the website for at least three years with this funding and will look for additional funding to support it in the future.

4. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

For the person with accessibility needs, finding relevant access information about trails through all the typical channels that are used for trip planning such as websites, apps, and brochures, is often an exhausting, futile effort. While there are an increasing number of parks, beaches, and trails that are accessible to people with disabilities there is a disconnect around informing people about such opportunities when they do exist. In essence, this lack of information serves as a barrier. Complete information about the amenities available at any given coastal access point can remove that barrier and enable people with disabilities and their families and friends to plan and enjoy trips to the coast.

5. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.

BORP is well established within the community of people with physical disabilities or visual impairments. Over the many years that the Wheelchair Rider's Guides have been in existence, they have been a critical resource for people who have accessibility needs.

As part of this project, BORP will engage with its state-wide network as well as the broader public via social media.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$100,000
Project Total	\$100,000

The anticipated source of funds for the project is an appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Environmental License Plate Fund, derived from sales and renewal of personalized license plates. Funds in the California Environmental License Plate Fund are available upon appropriation for purposes outlined in Public Resources Code Section 21190. One of these purposes is environmental education, including informal public education programs. Providing a web-based guide to wheelchair accessible parks and trails along the California coast and San Francisco Bay is informal public environmental education and is therefore an appropriate use of these funds.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This authorization is consistent with Chapter 9 of the Public Resources Code, Section 31400.3, which authorizes the Conservancy to "provide such assistance as is required to aid public agencies and nonprofit organizations in establishing a system of public coastal accessways, and related functions necessary to meet the objectives of this division." Consistent with this section, this project will increase public knowledge of existing wheelchair accessible facilities on the coast, thereby improving coastal access for wheelchair riders and many other members of the public as well.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective A** and **Goal 13, Objective L** of the Conservancy's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will implement projects that expand or enhance opportunities for access for people with disabilities to and along the coast and San Francisco Bay.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is inapplicable to the proposed website development project because the project does not constitute a “project” for the purposes of CEQA under Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs., § 15378). The project will provide information about existing public access areas and will not result in a direct change in the environment. Nor will it result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, where “reasonably foreseeable” excludes impacts that are speculative or unlikely to occur (14 Cal. Code Regs., § 15064(d)(3)).