

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

December 1, 2022

**INTEGRATING REGIONAL SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT AND  
SEA LEVEL RISE ADAPTATION**

Project No. 22-068-01

Project Manager: Rachel Couch

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$50,000 to the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment to prepare a study of governance and financing options for integrating regional sediment management into sea level rise adaptation planning in California.

**LOCATION:** Statewide

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EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1. [Project Location Maps](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

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

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment (“the grantee”) to prepare a study of governance and financing options for integrating regional sediment management into sea level rise adaptation planning in California.

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 Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Climate Ready Program.
  2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a \$50,000 grant to Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment (BEACON), a joint powers authority, to conduct a study and prepare a report outlining a range of available and feasible governance and financing options for integrating regional sediment management into sea level rise adaptation planning in California (Exhibit 1). The purpose of the project is to identify mechanisms to facilitate the availability and provision of sediment needed to support regional, nature-based sea level rise adaptation projects throughout coastal California.

Sediment forms the basis of beaches, dunes, and estuaries and provides nutrients vital to the health of coastal ecosystems. It is an essential building block for addressing coastal hazards associated with rising seas including shoreline erosion and flooding, loss of habitats, and damage to infrastructure. Effective, integrated governance structures, program coordination, and financial assistance is lacking between federal, state, and regional sediment management entities and constitutes a barrier to effective and urgently needed local and regional project planning. Similarly, effectively addressing projected climate impacts along California's coast will also require leadership, creativity, and innovation across all levels of government to achieve cost-effective and sustainable solutions. Recent state and federal funding allocations for climate resilience planning provide coastal communities a once in a generation opportunity to successfully leverage these resources. The project will examine options to integrate current federal and state sediment management and coastal adaptation programs with regional sea level rise planning efforts.

California's clear priority for coastal climate adaptation is to support the resilience of natural systems with natural or nature-based solutions, bolstering wetlands, restoring sandy beach and dune habitats and ecosystems, and developing 'Living Shorelines'. Successful implementation of nature-based solutions requires readily available sources of sand and sediment, adequate funding and technical support, supportive policies, and improved coordination between state and regional coastal management entities.

The statewide Coastal Sediment Master Plan identifies Regional Sediment Management as the state's preferred framework for implementation. The Sediment Master Plan (SMP) relies on eleven Regional Sediment Management Plans, and their varied governance and planning processes, for implementation. The California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW), responsible for statewide planning and coordination, is currently limited to state and federal agency representation under the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), dating from 2000. Regional planning representatives are not included in the MOU, nor are they formal members of the CSMW. Most have no regular participants in CSMW. In the past several

years, inadequate funding has been allocated to implementation of the California's Sediment Master Plan or the eleven Regional Sediment Management Plans. Simultaneously, local and regional agencies have been tasked with assessing regional vulnerability and adaptive measures to address sea level rise and other climate induced hazards. The above entities often operate in wholly separate spheres, resulting in missed strategic opportunities.

The intended audiences for the report are state agencies working on coastal management and climate adaptation, the Legislature, interested stakeholders, and members of the public. The Coastal Sediment Management Work Group supports BEACON undertaking this project. The project will inform the Conservancy's development of nature-based adaptation and resilience approaches and projects under its Climate Ready Program.

The study will examine current governance structures and current policies and programs of coastal sediment management and evaluate their effectiveness and contribution to increased integration of sediment management and sea level rise approaches. The project will also identify lessons learned and best practices for using science to inform policy; identify strategies to overcome barriers to enabling long-term solutions that address sea level rise and related cumulative erosion, sediment transport and fate issues, advance regional sediment management; and contribute to implementation of the California Coastal Sediment Management Master Plan. The project will result in a report, informed by stakeholder input and technical expertise, that outlines a range of innovative governance and finance options aimed at an integrated approach to regional sediment management and sea level rise adaptation. Ultimately, the project will result in a framework for integrating policies into regional sediment management plans.

**Site Description:** The project area encompasses the entire California coastline and connected watersheds vulnerable to climate disruption. This report will inform regional sea level rise adaptation planning throughout the state as well as regional sediment management and supports the statewide mission of the California Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW). (Exhibit 1, Figure 2).

**Grant Applicant Qualifications:** BEACON is a joint powers authority made up of the Counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura and six coastal cities in the region: Santa Barbara, Goleta, Carpinteria, Ventura, Oxnard, and Port Hueneme. BEACON focuses on beach restoration through regional planning and coordination. Established in 1986, BEACON has the capacity to manage the state grant for this project, including established fiscal controls and financial and accounting staff. BEACON has decades of experience managing state grants and the ability to manage cash flow and grant reimbursement payments. BEACON has a track record of managing similar grant projects, including several research and analysis projects on behalf of the CSMW and DBW in the past. BEACON is currently managing a research grant focused on regional sediment management source, transport, and fate on behalf of the California Ocean Protection Council. Executive and program staff will manage the project along with a selected sub-contractor and technical advisors.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:**

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

**Selection Criteria**

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

See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Strategic Plan" section below.

**2. Project is a good investment of state resources.**

The project will advance California's Sediment Management Plan objectives that call for facilitation and coordination of beach and coastal watershed efforts with federal, state, local and public stakeholders; and collaboration with regulatory agencies to provide a consistent permit framework for coastal sediment projects (Section 2.2). The proposed project is also consistent with Sediment Management Plan goals to incorporate regulatory-appropriate procedures designed to streamline Regional Sediment Management permitting activities while protecting natural and economic coastal resources; foster team-building between agencies with disparate missions and objectives; increase scientific understanding of technical issues that arise within the coastal and oceanic environment as a result of Regional Sediment Management activities; and provide for public input to meet stakeholder concerns (Section 2.3).

The recommended project furthers the state's prioritization of nature-based coastal adaptation as identified throughout the California Climate Adaptation Strategy/Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk Plan. The plan identifies nature-based solutions and living shorelines as preferred approaches to preparing for and responding to coastal climate hazards such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding, and storms.

The project will provide important benefits to Californians by improving how sediment is managed to achieve both climate resilience and shoreline recreation and objectives along the state's iconic coastline. Finally, the project is feasible, the budget is reasonable, and it leverages non-state resources in the form of in-kind support.

**3. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.**

The project will identify options to facilitate the implementation of projects with co-benefits and alleviate multiple stressors within communities facing coastal climate impacts. Sea level rise impacts are projected to negatively affect public health and diminish recreational amenities such as beaches and coastal open space. These co-benefits include beaches maintained for recreation and as refuges during increasingly frequent extreme heat events, enhanced coastal habitats which benefit wildlife, improved water quality, attenuated flooding, and sequestered carbon, all of which can increase community-preparedness or resilience to future climate change impacts.

**4. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.**

BEACON will conduct outreach to technical experts and agency participants, including members of CSMW, regional sediment managers, and regional climate practitioners. These stakeholders

will be consulted via meetings and surveys regarding opportunities for increasing program effectiveness and outcomes, including changes in governance and financing structures. This outreach will be facilitated in a manner appropriate for the intended audience and will ensure that the project concepts are anchored in community priorities and expertise.

BEACON is a public agency and has a track record working within communities and incorporating insights gained from community engagement into project planning. BEACON has been a key participant in the CSMW in assisting in undertaking strategic planning to support Regional Sediment Management Plans.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is fiscal year 2021/22 appropriation of \$50,000 from the General Fund specifically for the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment for analysis of options for aligning regional sediment management and sea level rise adaptation on behalf of the California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup. See Budget Act of 2021, Section 19.57 (e)(11)(A), added by Budget Trailer Bill SB 170 (2021)

In-kind services in the form of stakeholder engagement meeting planning and review and technical support will be provided by BEACON. The value of these is estimated to be \$15,000.

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

The proposed project is undertaken pursuant to Sections 31113 of the Public Resources Code (Chapter 3 of Division 21), as described below.

Section 31113 of Chapter 3 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code authorizes the Conservancy to address the impacts and potential impacts of climate change on resources within the Conservancy’s jurisdiction (Section 31113(a)). The recommended project will address resources within the Conservancy’s jurisdiction because it will be address sediment supply in the coastal zone.

Section 31113, subsections (b) and (c) authorize the Conservancy to award grants to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to undertake projects including those that address extreme weather events, sea level rise, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. Consistent with this section, the recommended project will prepare a report that will address sea level rise and coastal sediment management governance, policy integration, and funding to expedite the planning and implementation of nature-based solutions and sustainable coastal adaptation strategies.

Section 31113(c) states that the Conservancy must prioritize grants for projects that maximize public benefits and have one of several purposes, including reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, preserving and enhancing natural lands, conserving biodiversity, and providing

recreational opportunities. Consistent with this section, the recommended project maximizes public benefits (see the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria” section above) and seeks to enhance natural lands by promoting restoration of natural watershed processes and to provide sustainable recreational opportunities by ensuring that suitable sand and sediment reaches the state’s beaches and coastal wetlands.

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

Consistent with **Goal 8, Objective A**, the proposed project will inform coastal climate adaptation planning in California by outlining available and feasible governance and finance options to better integrate regional sediment management and sea level rise adaptation planning.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

The recommended project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15262 because it involves planning studies and feasibility analyses for possible future actions that the Conservancy has not approved, adopted, or funded, and will include consideration of environmental factors.

The project is also categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) under Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 15306 because it involves information collection and resource evaluation for possible future action, and there will be no disturbance to an environmental resource.

Upon approval of the project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Exemption.