

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
September 5, 2024

**EXPLORE THE COAST GRANT PROGRAM – 2024-2025**

Project No. 24-030-01

Project Managers: Sara Haugen, Vanessa Aczon, Elle Bent & Lexi Caruthers

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Consideration and authorization to disburse up to \$994,197 to 13 nonprofit organizations and 1 tribe that facilitate and enhance the public’s opportunities to explore the California coast. Participants are drawn from throughout the State and will visit coastal locations from Del Norte County south to San Diego County.

**LOCATION:** Participants are drawn from throughout the state and visit various locations along the California coast and the San Francisco Bay shoreline (see Exhibit 1).

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EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Advisory Board Members](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

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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 nine hundred and ninety-four thousand one hundred ninety-seven dollars (\$994,197) to 13 nonprofit organizations and 1 tribe for 14 projects that facilitate and enhance the public’s opportunities to explore the California coast (“the projects”). The Executive Officer of the Coastal Conservancy may authorize modifications to one or more of the 14 projects if the modified projects continue to promote the goal of facilitating and enhancing the public’s opportunities to explore the California coast. The 14 projects are as follows (presented in alphabetical order by the grantee’s name):

- Black Surf Santa Cruz: Sixty-six thousand seven hundred dollars (\$66,700) to provide 660 individuals from historically excluded groups in the Central Coast and San Francisco Bay

regions with transformative surfing experiences aimed at fostering belonging, mental well-being, and equitable access to ocean activities.

- DiverSeaFy: Forty-three thousand two hundred dollars (\$43,200) to provide 90 teenage graduates of SCUBA training from underserved communities in Southern California with the opportunity to explore the underwater ecosystem.
- Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians: One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to reconnect 250 tribal citizens from the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians with their coastal heritage through immersive Family Camps, fostering environmental and cultural awareness while promoting indigenous food sovereignty practices.
- Greater Farallones Association: Thirty-eight thousand dollars (\$38,000) to provide 175 low-income students from Sonoma and Mendocino counties with the LIMPETS program, fostering scientific understanding of coastal ecosystems through immersive field trips and classroom sessions within the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.
- Green Cities Fund (fiscal sponsor for Queer Surf): One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 535 participants from LGBTQ+ communities throughout California with surf meetups and camping trips along the coast to cultivate in-depth connections to the natural environment.
- Insight Garden Program: One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 300 formerly incarcerated individuals and some of their family members from multiple regions of the state with enjoyable and healing day trips and camping trips along the coast.
- LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired: One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 120 blind or low vision youth and young adults from the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California with accessible coastal recreational activities to gain knowledge about the environment and develop essential life skills and self-confidence.
- Martin Park Inc DBA Martin Park: Twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$27,200) to provide 35-50 youth (grades 3rd-12<sup>th</sup>) and 8-10 accompanying parents or guardians from Fresno with day trips to the Central Coast to explore the beach, relax, and develop connections with peers and their families.
- MeWater Foundation: Fifty-two thousand seven hundred forty dollars (\$52,740) to bring 1,940 San Francisco underserved youth to Bay Area beaches to gain lifelong knowledge and build confidence and connection to coastal environments through surfing, mindfulness practices, and marine ecosystem education.
- Orange County Adult Achievement Center DBA My Day Counts: Twenty-three thousand two hundred fifty-seven dollars (\$23,257) to provide 47 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have limited mobility or are non-ambulatory with enjoyable and adaptive coastal exploration activities.

- Paddle for Peace: Sixty-eight thousand one hundred dollars (\$68,100) to provide up to 520 underserved youth from Southeast San Diego’s inner city with a mix of water recreational activities and hands-on environmental education experiences designed to provide a fun and healing environment, empower them with scientific knowledge, and foster long-lasting connections to the coast.
- Project Avary: Seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) to provide 1,190 youths of incarcerated parents with coastal hiking, camping, and adventuring trips designed to foster long-term healing and relationship with the coast.
- Semillas Sociedad Civil (fiscal sponsor for Anawakalmekak International University Preparatory of North America): One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 40-45 high school students from East Los Angeles, who identify as Indigenous Migrant, with trips to Catalina Island to deepen their understanding of environmental stewardship and connect them to their ancestral coastlands.
- Social Good Fund (fiscal sponsor for Salted Roots): One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 595 youth and adults, primarily girls, women, and gender expansive people of color, with surfing lessons and mentorship through their Community Soul Surfer Program to develop leadership skills and build confidence.

Prior to commencement of the projects, each 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.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Any other applicable agreements determined necessary for the project by the Conservancy’s Executive Officer.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapters 4.5 and 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the resource and recreational goals in the San Francisco Bay Area (Chapter 4.5), and the establishment of a system of public accessways to and along the California coast (Chapter 9).
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
3. The 13 proposed nonprofit organizations are organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize \$994,197 to 13 nonprofit organizations and 1 tribe for 14 projects that facilitate and enhance the public's opportunities to explore the coast of California under the Conservancy's Explore the Coast (ETC) grant program. Participant numbers stated in the project summaries are approximate and may vary up to 25%. Additionally, unexpected circumstances, such as beach closures or adverse weather, may necessitate project changes. For this reason, the recommended resolution includes authority for the Executive Officer to approve changes that are consistent with the ETC's grant program goals.

The purpose of the ETC grant program is to provide coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast (ETC Priority Communities). ETC Priority Communities include, but are not limited to, lower-income individuals and households, people with disabilities, people of color, indigenous communities, immigrant communities, foster youth, and other historically excluded communities who face societal challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. The proposed projects meet one or more of the following priorities: provides an enjoyable experience at the coast; reduces economic, physical, operational, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast; or inspires an ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning and interactive activities.

The ETC grant program includes projects that enhance visitors' ability to learn about natural, recreational, cultural, and historical resources of the California coast and San Francisco Bay shorelines. A variety of activities and programmatic services are eligible for funding under the ETC grant program, such as providing transportation, reducing the economic cost of coastal program attendance, providing coastal experiences for persons with disabilities, and overnight coastal experiences for participants. This year's ETC grant program solicitation was released in early November 2023; webinars and virtual technical assistance sessions were held in January 2024 to provide further guidance for potential applicants on the program, the application, and administrative requirements. Additional technical assistance was available upon request and Conservancy project staff helped several organizations prior to the application deadline.

In recommending projects to the Conservancy, staff aim to equitably distribute this funding and maximize the impact of every dollar spent. To better achieve these goals, Conservancy staff created an Explore the Coast Advisory Board in 2019. Advisory Board members serve a term of two years and may be invited to continue their service for a second term. This year's Advisory Board cohort represents various regions of the State with backgrounds in environmental justice, coastal access issues, tribal advocacy, disability rights, foundation work and funding, grant program administration, and environmental education (Exhibit 2). The Advisory Board advises staff on the application process, application review, and ongoing management of the grant program. The Advisory Board's participation with staff in the review and selection of projects advances equity by giving the communities served by the program an opportunity to provide direct input on their needs and the types of projects that will best serve their needs.

This year, the Conservancy received 116 applications, requesting over \$8,114,662 in Conservancy funding. Staff reviewed the 116 applications and forwarded 42 applications to the Advisory Board. Each of the 42 applications were reviewed by at least 3 Advisory Board members. In May, the Advisory Board met to discuss and recommend applications to staff. Following this meeting, staff finalized the list of 14 recommended projects with an average award size of \$71,000.

Staff estimates that the proposed 2024-2025 ETC grant program will engage over 6,100 people through the proposed projects. Of these people, project partners estimate that the program will serve over 5,500 low-income Californians, 5,700 people of color, 1,000 youth who are homeless or in foster care, approximately 650 people for whom English is not their first language, and at least 1,900 people with physical, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities.

Staff recommends funding the following 14 projects for the 2024-2025 ETC grants program. The projects are arranged alphabetically by grant applicant. Each individual project summary includes the grant applicant; project name; recommended funding amount; geographic region of the participants; a brief project description; and information on the consistency of the proposed project with the Conservancy’s proposed funding source, its enabling legislation, and its Strategic Plan. In addition, each project summary provides relevant information for project compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**BLACK SURF SANTA CRUZ**

**\$66,700**

**Black Surf Santa Cruz**

**Central Coast**

The Black Surf Santa Cruz (BSSC) project will provide 660 participants from historically excluded groups across Santa Cruz County with 3 distinct surfing programs aimed to increase feelings of belonging, mental well-being, and access to ocean activities. The project’s 3 surfing programs are:

- (1) Prepare to Pop-Up (P2PUP), which supports learners with little to no experience along the coast or in the ocean with a guided, multi-week, and multi-touchpoint ocean training program as part of a committed cohort of similarly experienced participants;
- (2) Pop-Up Program (PUP), which consists of single-day surf pop-up lessons and wrap-around ocean/safety/racial and environmental justice curriculum experience; and
- (3) The Liberation Paddle Out (LPO) event, held during Juneteenth, which celebrates diversity in ocean activities and addresses racial reckoning and equality in coastal spaces.

All participants will have the opportunity to participate in all 3 programs although not all are expected to do so. By intentionally centering and celebrating historically excluded groups in coastal spaces, BSSC aims to break down barriers to participation caused by systemic racism, lack of representation, and access issues. This project ultimately creates a more inclusive and welcoming environment in the ocean and coastal areas.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Cowells Beach, Pleasure Point County Park Beaches, Capitola Beach, and other Santa Cruz County Beaches.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**DIVERSEAFY**

**\$43,200**

**Underwater Exploration for Underrepresented Communities**

**South Coast, Inland  
Southern California and  
Deserts**

The Underwater Exploration for Underrepresented Communities project will serve 90 teenagers who recently graduated from SCUBA training and who are from underserved communities in Long Beach, Compton, Venice, Inglewood, Carson, Santa Monica, and Lancaster by providing them with opportunities to explore the underwater ecosystem. DiverSeaFy provides SCUBA certification and ocean conservation courses to Black Indigenous and People of Color high school students in Southern California. However, financial barriers often prevent these certified divers from continuing their exploration. The project will provide each participant with local boat trips to Catalina Island, Anacapa Island, Santa Cruz Island, and shore dives in Laguna Beach and Malibu. These will be full-day, immersive dive trips that will help participants improve their diving skills and enjoy more underwater experiences. Two dive trips will include participation in the Annual Avalon Harbor Cleanup and Coastal Cleanup Day at Santa Monica Pier. By removing financial barriers, DiverSeaFy aims to encourage ocean conservation and foster a deeper sense of belonging in the diving community.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Catalina Island, Anacapa Island, Santa Cruz Island, Laguna Beach, Old Malibu Road Beaches, and the Santa Monica Pier.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**DRY CREEK RANCHERIA BAND OF POMO INDIANS**

**\$100,000**

**Water is Life – Pomo Youth Alliance**

**North Coast**

The Water Is Life – Pomo Youth Alliance project will serve 250 tribal citizens from the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians in Sonoma, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. The project will reconnect indigenous youth and families with the coastline through six Family Camps, each hosting 32-42 people, at locations such as MacKerricher State Park, Fort Ross State Park, and other ceremonial lands. Project activities will include hiking, kayaking, traditional harvesting and cooking, stargazing, field journaling, marine animal observation, and cultural crafting. The project includes providing participants with food, transportation, lodging, and additional resources, such as cultural guides and chaperones who will further ensure participants have the support they need for a safe and healthy experience. The mission is to promote environmental and cultural awareness, highlighting the importance of water. Historically, the Pomo had seasonal coastal villages for harvesting seaweed, salt, and fish. The project fosters appreciation for coastal waters through environmental and cultural education. Camps will be aligned with indigenous food sovereignty practices and offered in various seasons. The project’s focus areas include environmental and water conservation, family bonding, and cultural resurgence.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Fort Ross, MacKerricher State Park, and other culturally significant coastal access points.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**GREATER FARALLONES ASSOCIATION**

**\$38,000**

**Connecting Students to the Coast**

**North Coast**

The Connecting Students to the Coast project will connect 175 students from low-income middle and high schools in Sonoma and Mendocino counties to their local coast by providing them with the LiMPETS program (Long-Term Monitoring Program and Experiential Training for Students). LiMPETS is an immersive education and community science program that monitors the coastal ecosystems of California and helps youth develop a scientific understanding of the ocean. Through the project, participants will explore the rocky intertidal sites and sandy beach shores in Sonoma and Mendocino County within the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary to encounter intertidal marine life, document their observations using real scientific techniques, and develop long-term connections to the California coast. The project will provide participants with a 1-hour preparatory classroom session followed by a 3-hour field trip to a LiMPETS site. In addition, the project will provide 8 to 10 Sonoma and Mendocino county teachers with an on-site development workshop on species identification and completing ecological surveys so they can successfully teach the program to students.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Carmet Beach, Shell Beach, Fort Ross Cove, and Gerstle Cove in Sonoma County.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**GREEN CITIES FUND (FISCAL SPONSOR FOR QUEER SURF)**

**\$100,000**

**Project LGBTQ+ Coastal Access**

**North Coast, Far North, San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Valley and Sierras, Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley, South Coast, Inland Southern California and Deserts**

Project LGBTQ+ Coastal Access will serve 535 participants from LGBTQ+ communities throughout California, although, most participants will come from the Bay Area and Southern California. The project consists of 2 programs that will be offered to all participants although not all participants are expected to participate in both programs. The programs are:



- (1) The Queer Surf Together Program will connect participants to each other and to the coast through eight surf and beach meetups that will provide art activities, wave riding safety and surf tips, bird watching, and tide pooling. The Queer Surf Together meetups will take place at various locations along the coast like Pacifica State Beach, Surfers Beach in Half Moon Bay, and Ocean Beach in San Diego.
- (2) Sea Hare Camping Trips Program will provide four three-night camping adventures at campgrounds like Mendocino Headlands State Park and Pismo State Beach, and an environmental leadership camp on Catalina Island. The program’s immersive camp experience cultivates in-depth connections to the natural environment and to the community through daily skill shares, learning to read surf reports, surf sessions, shared meals, and campfire discussions. LGBTQ+ participants will feel confident and empowered to safely explore the coastlines where they have previously been excluded.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Mendocino Headland State Park, Gaviota State Park, Pismo Beach State Park, Morro Strand State Park, Manresa State Beach, Howlands Landing on Catalina Island, Pacifica State Beach, Surfers Beach in Half Moon Bay, Cowell’s Beach, Surfers Point in Ventura, San Onofre State Beach, and Oceanside Harbor Beach, Torrey Pines State Beach, and Ocean Beach in San Diego.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**INSIGHT GARDEN PROGRAM**

**\$100,000**

**Reentry, Restore, and Reconnect Excursions**

**San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Valley and Sierras, Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley, South Coast, Inland Southern California and Deserts**

The Reentry, Restore, and Reconnect Excursions project will provide 300 formerly incarcerated individuals from multiple regions of the state, who are reentering society with coastal trips. The project will bring 252 participants on twelve day trips and 16 participants with 32 of their family members on two overnight family camping trips. Participants will learn about coastal stewardship on ranger-led hikes and have unstructured time for play, reflection, and sharing

meals to build community. The day trips will take place at Point Reyes National Seashore, Asilomar State Beach, and Malibu Lagoon State Beach, and the overnight family camping trips will be in Big Sur and Malibu. The goal of the project is to provide enjoyable and healing experiences for participants undergoing reentry to society, a process which can be stressful, traumatic, and isolating.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Point Reyes National Seashore, Asilomar State Beach, Malibu Lagoon State Beach, Pfeiffer State Park in Big Sur, and Malibu State Park.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

**\$100,000**

**Youth Adventurers (YA)**

**San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Valley and Sierras, Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley**

The Youth Adventurers project will provide accessible coastal recreational activities for 120 blind or low vision youth and young adults, aged 14-26, from the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California counties. Over a span of two years, project participants will explore and enjoy California coastal locations, gain knowledge about the environment, and develop essential life skills and self-confidence. Project activities will include kayaking, offshore fishing, sailing, surfing, educational outings, and beach fun. While the focus of these activities will be fun and adventure alongside blind peers and mentors, project participants will also enhance their independence and leadership abilities. This project will include environmental education through museum and aquarium visits, and opportunities to enjoy and appreciate natural resources.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Tomales Bay State Park, Monterey Bay, Año Nuevo State Park, and multiple beaches in Santa Cruz County. The proposed project is consistent with the use of California Environmental License Plate Funds because it involves environmental education as described above.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above. The proposed project is also consistent with Chapter 4.5: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program, Section 31162(a) because it improves public access to the bay and coast by providing bay and/or coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**MARTIN PARK INC DBA MARTIN PARK**

**\$27,200**

**Martin Park Aquaventure**

**San Joaquin Valley**

Martin Park Aquaventure project will provide up to six daytrips to Central Coast locations, such as Morro Bay State Park, Point Sur State Historic Park, Santa Cruz Beach and Boardwalk, and Monterey State Beach for 35-50 youth (grades 3rd-12<sup>th</sup>) and 8-10 accompanying parents or guardians. Martin Park is a grassroots Christian organization, and its Executive Director is a member of the same communities that the project will serve. The project will welcome participants of all backgrounds, who will primarily come from low-income, Hispanic, and/or immigrant communities in Fresno. The project's mission is to provide under-served youth with opportunities to explore the magic of the beach, see the ocean's wonders, unwind, and develop connections with peers and families. The project will provide participants with the opportunity to attend all six daytrips, which will include activities such as a tide pool exploration, kayaking, swimming, boogie-boarding, sandcastle building, beach volleyball, kite flying, and museum tours.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Morro Bay State Park, Point Sur State Historic Park, Monarch Butterfly Grove, Avila Beach, Cowell's Beach, and Monterey State Beach.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**MEWATER FOUNDATION**

**\$52,740**

**MeWater Surf and Outdoor Education Camps**

**San Francisco Bay Area**

The MeWater Surf and Outdoor Education Camps project, through MeWater Foundation’s Surf and Outdoor Education Camps program, will bring 1,940 underserved San Francisco youth to Bay Area beaches for surfing, water safety lessons, and to gain lifelong knowledge and confidence in their ability to interact with the ocean, beaches, and outdoor resources. Over the course of 3 years, the project will host around 65 Surf and Outdoor Education Camps. Each camp is 6 hours long and serves 25-30 youth. Each camp includes coastal and marine ecosystem education, surfing and ocean introduction instruction, mindfulness practices, mental health exercises, “circle time” to share peer-to-peer experiences, and a beach cleanup. The project’s camps will be free to participants, and the project will fund transportation, food, and programming to bring participants to the coast for multiple camps throughout the year. The multi-camp program provides numerous touchpoints for the youth in an ongoing program that builds leadership skills and a solid outdoor and water safety skill set. Teenaged participants who have attended several years of camp can become MeWater ambassadors, who connect with younger participants to share their experiences and the positive impacts of MeWater programming on their lives. MeWater supports youth who experience trauma and stress due to complex family dynamics and social pressures inherent to low-income communities. Most youth served by MeWater are ages 5-18, Black or Latinx, and come from low-income areas of San Francisco, including Bayview, Hunters Point, and Visitacion Valley.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Stinson Beach, Miramar Beach, and San Francisco’s Ocean Beach.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**ORANGE COUNTY ADULT ACHIEVEMENT CENTER DBA MY DAY COUNTS** **\$23,257**

**Adaptive Access to the Coast for Adults** **South Coast**

Through the Adaptive Access to the Coast for Adults project, Orange County Adult Achievement Center (OCAAC) will serve a total of 47 adults with intellectual disabilities and other developmental disabilities who require the use of a wheelchair, a walker, or have an unsteady gait. They will offer 8-12 modified trips, each accommodating 10 individuals, consisting of at least 6 participants, 2 instructors, and 2 aides per trip. OCAAC will provide additional support to ensure participants have the opportunity to experience a variety of adaptive and fun coastal activities that will meet their specific mobility needs, improve their overall wellbeing, and expose them to activities most have never had the opportunity to experience. Activities will include trips such as: a scenic coastal drive along Pacific Coast Highway, with a staff member acting as a tour guide; bird watching at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve; picnics on the beach; 1-hour science labs at the Ocean Institute that provides an immersive educational experience exploring marine science and history; and a tour of the Ocean Institute that includes the Sea Star Touch Tank.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Huntington State Beach, Seal Beach, Crystal Cove State Beach, Laguna Main Beach, Corona del Mar State Beach, Bolsa Chica State Beach, Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, and the Ocean Institute.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**PADDLE FOR PEACE** **\$68,100**

**Diversify the Coast** **South Coast**

The Diversify the Coast project will serve 520 low income youth from Southeast San Diego's inner city. These youth are primarily Black Indigneous and People of Color. Over the course of two years, the project will offer: (1) a 16-week Surf and Science program, featuring hands-on educational workshops focused on art, environmental justice, and marine science, visits to the Birch Aquarium, and beach activities, such as surfing, paddleboarding, and boogie boarding; (2) a 4-day boating camp teaching wakeboarding, wake surfing, tubing and rafting; (3) a 4-day underwater exploration program consisting of tidepooling, kayaking, snorkeling, and

underwater photography; and (4) 11 coastal “Beach Pop-up” meetups for youth and their families providing surfing lessons, and recreational supplies such as games, snorkel equipment, surfboards, wetsuits and life jackets. Participants will be offered the opportunity to participate in multiple programs but participants are not expected to participate in all of the offered programs. Lastly, the Surf and Science program participants will have the opportunity to join a 12-month Youth Mentorship Program to develop skills as peer mentors for new participants. This comprehensive program will create a supportive, fun, and healing environment where participants gain valuable skills, knowledge, joy, relaxation and a deeper connection to the coast, fostering a sense of responsibility for marine ecosystems and inspiring a new generation of scientists dedicated to protecting the coast.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Pacific Beach, Tourmaline Surfer’s Beach, Torrey Pines Nature Reserve, La Jolla Shores, Ocean Beach, Mission Bay, Fiesta Island, La Jolla Cove, and the Birch Aquarium.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

<b>PROJECT AVARY</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Coastal Outdoor Leadership Program for Children with Incarcerated Parents</b>	<b>North Coast, San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Valley and Sierras, San Joaquin Valley</b>

The project will provide one year of coastal access and leadership experiences for 1,190 youth from lower-income households with incarcerated parents to explore the coastal environments of Marin County. The project’s activities seek to foster long-term healing for children with incarcerated parents. The project includes monthly overnight youth leadership retreats on the Bolinas Lagoon and other coastal venues, a four-week long summer camp in Point Reyes, and 4 ocean adventure days, provided every 4 months. The project will provide youth with opportunities to engage in ocean sports like boogie boarding, surfing, and swimming, and offers swim lessons to participants with little or no experience with water activities. At summer camp, participants spend mornings hiking along trails, marshes, and tidepools where they learn about the ocean environment and stewardship to take care of the coastland. Project Avary believes in

building leadership from within their community and offers paid junior counselor positions to youth ages 14-18, and the opportunity to become a full counselor at age 19.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Point Reyes National Seashore, Stinson Beach, Bolinas Beach, Bolinas Lagoon, Muir Beach, Slide Ranch, Sonoma Coast State Park, Doran Park, Tomales Bay, Chicken Ranch Beach, Heart’s Desire Beach, Limantour Beach, Half Moon Bay State Beach, and Pescadero Point Beaches.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

<b>SEMILLAS SOCIEDAD CIVIL (FISCAL SPONSOR FOR ANAWAKALMEKAK INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY OF NORTH AMERICA)</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>2025 Anawakalmekak Beach Trips</b>	<b>South Coast</b>

The 2025 Anawakalmekak Beach Trips project will serve 40-45 high school students from East Los Angeles, with emphasis on recruiting those identifying as Indigenous Migrant with affiliations to Aztec, Zapotec, Mayan, Huichol, and other indigenous tribes. The project will take participants on two, seven-day trips, one to the Kumeyaay Reservation in San Diego and the other to Pimungna, also known as Catalina Island. The project will immerse participants in a blend of research and recreation by engaging them in nature hikes, swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, and storytelling, among other activities. The project will deepen their understanding of environmental stewardship and cultural sovereignty, connecting them to their ancestral coastlands and offering insights into Indigenous marine and coastal management practices. Leadership opportunities are integrated in the project, including a student council playing an essential role in peer recruitment and activity selection and mentorship opportunities with program alumni.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Humboldt County beaches and Catalina Island beaches.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.

**SOCIAL GOOD FUND (FISCAL SPONSOR FOR SALTED ROOTS)**

**\$100,000**

**Community Soul Surfer Program**

**San Francisco Bay Area**

The Community Soul Surfer Program project will serve 600 participants and will connect girls and women-identifying, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people of color to ocean-based recreation. The project includes a suite of complimentary beach-based, female-centered surf programs designed to welcome participants into an inclusive and supportive surf community and provide opportunities for participants to grow as surfers, community leaders, and ocean advocates. For each of the two years (2025 and 2026), the project consists of four Alameda Newbie days in the spring, six Soul Surfer Saturdays, six Community Surf Meetup days, three Rising Leadership Youth Surf Days, two Environmental Stewardship events, two Wisdom Weaver Workshops, and four 4-day long youth summer day camps at Pacifica State Beach and Half Moon Bay State Beach. The weekly and day camp activities include surfing lessons, community leadership, volunteer-led workshops, and environmental stewardship activities. The project aims to connect participants with the ocean as well as develop leadership skills, surfing skills, and confidence.

**Funding:** The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Linda Mar Beach at Pacifica State Beach, Miramar Beach in Half Moon Bay, Stinson Beach, and San Francisco’s Ocean Beach.

**Enabling Legislation:** The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways because it expands the public's access to and enjoyment of coastal resources by providing coastal experiences as described above.

**Strategic Plan:** The proposed project will further the following strategic objectives:

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

**CEQA:** The proposed project is categorically exempt under Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) because it involves regular operation of coastal locations that will be visited with no expansion of use.



**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 projects recommended for funding under this authorization will serve an estimated 6,100 people from communities throughout the state and will provide public access to the coast for recreational, educational, and stewardship programs. The proposed projects will leverage approximately \$2.5 million in additional funding through project partners and hundreds of hours of support by volunteers.

The ETC grants program furthers the goals of the State’s 2023 Outdoors for All initiative to provide equitable access to parks and nature. The ETC program is specifically called out in Strategy 3.3.3 “Continue funding and exploring opportunities to expand grants that promote creative and affordable transportation options, including Explore the Coast and Parks California’s Route to Parks grants.” The ETC program is also consistent with the conservation priorities to expand access to nature identified in Pathways to 30x30.

**3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area.**

Federally recognized Tribes and Indigenous communities are among the communities that are designated as a priority under the Explore the Coast grants program. Project partners who serve these communities work with tribes to access coastal ancestral lands for traditional stewardship and leadership development, promote inter-generational communication, and practice traditional ecological knowledge. Several of the proposed projects expect to serve some Native American participants, and the following 2 projects will serve tribal citizens from the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians in Sonoma, Lake, and Mendocino Counties and high school students who identify as Indigenous Migrant with affiliations to Aztec, Zapotec, Mayan, Huichol, and other indigenous tribes:

- Water is Life – Pomo Youth Alliance project (Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians); and
- 2025 Anawakalmekak Beach Trips project (Semillas Sociedad Civil, fiscal sponsor for Anawakalmekak International University Preparatory of North America).

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

While the primary objective of the ETC grants program is to provide Californians joyful coastal experiences, the ETC program has several additional benefits. The recommended projects will reduce economic barriers by providing participants with free or reduced-cost program fees.

They projects will reduce geographic barriers for coastal and inland communities alike through subsidized transportation and physical barriers by providing coastal experiences for persons with disabilities. The projects will reduce societal barriers by offering safe access to coastal locations and culturally relevant activities. In addition, the projects will help to protect California’s coast for future generations by inspiring a coastal stewardship ethic.

Evidence suggests that underserved and frontline communities are disproportionately affected by social and environmental stressors. The proposed projects seek to reduce these stressors either through direct coastal access or through a combination of access and intentional programming designed to provide mental and physical health benefits.

A subset of the projects recommended for funding will feature program elements that provide participants with leadership development and/or job training programs, preparing them for potential long-term opportunities in the environmental or sustainable land use field.

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

The proposed projects are primarily led by nonprofit organizations who either have close ties with the communities they serve or are led by the communities themselves. Engagement typically involves dialogue between the communities being served and staff with relevant training and cultural competency.

The broad level of support for environmental education, resource protection and enhancement, and public access projects is indicated by the large numbers of people that will participate in the 2024-2025 ETC program. It is estimated that over 6,100 people will be served by the 14 ETC projects. In addition, this suite of proposed ETC projects is supported by elected officials, numerous community and nonprofit organizations, and local agencies (See Exhibit 3).

**PROJECT FINANCING**

<b>Coastal Conservancy</b>	<b>\$994,197</b>
Others (leveraged funds excluding in-kind)	\$2,418,572
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$3,531,672</b>

Two sources of Conservancy funding are expected to be used for the ETC grants program. The first funding source is an appropriation from the Conservancy’s Coastal Access Account, which consists of coastal development permit application fees required by the California Coastal Commission (Public Resources Code Sections 30620.1(b) & 30620.2). Coastal Access Account funds may be used for grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for the development, maintenance, and operation of new or existing facilities that provide public access to the coast, excluding San Francisco Bay. Use of the Coastal Access Account funds is appropriate for all of the ETC 2024-2025 proposed projects because each will develop, maintain, or operate an existing facility that provides access to the coast. Please refer to the “Project Summary” section, above, for more information on the specific facility(ies) associated with each proposed project.

The second expected funding source for the proposed projects is an appropriation 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. These purposes include funding environmental education programs. Use of the Environmental License Plate Fund is appropriate for the proposed project listed below, which includes environmental education. Please refer to the “Project Summary” section, above, and the “Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” section, below, for more information on how the proposed project is consistent with Division 21.

- LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Youth Adventurers)

Project partners will leverage approximately \$2.4 million in other funds for the 2024-2025 ETC grants. The projects will also benefit from hundreds of hours of volunteer time, plus donations or price reductions on outdoor gear, clothing, equipment, and transportation services, and free site and facility usages via partnerships between organizations.

Unless specifically identified as “Required Match,” the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. The Conservancy does not typically require matching funds or in-kind services, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders or of in-kind services. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete a project.

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

Staff recommends the Conservancy find that the 14 proposed projects are consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code as described in the “Project Summary” section, above. Below is a list or reference to proposed projects that staff recommends the Conservancy find consistent with the relevant section of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation.

Chapter 4.5 San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program

The proposed project listed below will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165, regarding recreational and resource goals in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Pursuant to Section 31162(a), the Conservancy is authorized to award grants to projects located in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that will help improve public access to, within, and around the bay, coast, ridgetops and urban open spaces through completion and operation of regional bay, coast, water and ridge trail systems, and local trails connecting to population centers and public facilities. Pursuant to Section 31162(d), the Conservancy is authorized to award grants that promote, assist, and enhance projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes. Pursuant to Section 31165, the Conservancy is authorized to award grants for activities that are compatible with the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of ocean, coastal, bay, or watershed resources, or that facilitate environmental education related to these resources. The

project listed below is consistent with these sections as it helps to achieve at least one of these goals, as more particularly described in the “Project Summary” section, above.

- LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Youth Adventurers)

#### Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways

All proposed projects will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31400-31410, regarding public access to and enjoyment of coastal resources.

Section 31400 states the Legislature’s intent that the Conservancy play a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state’s coastline, including San Francisco Bay. Section 31400.3 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. All projects proposed are consistent with these sections as more particularly described in the “Project Summary” section, above.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):**

All 14 of the projects proposed for funding are consistent with Strategic Plan goals listed below. Please see the “Project Summary” section, above, for more information on how each proposed project meets these goals.

- **Goal 1.1:** The project directly benefits one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The project provides enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

#### **CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

Conservancy staff reviewed the 14 proposed projects for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21189 and its implementing regulations (Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR), Sections 15000-15387)). All of the proposed projects are categorically exempt under Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) which exempts the operation, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities or topographic features involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, including pedestrian trails (Section 15301(c)) and wildlife areas and stream channels to protect fish and wildlife resources (Section 15301(i)). Please see the “Project Summary” section above, for more information on each proposed project and its compliance with CEQA.

Upon approval of the projects, Conservancy staff will file Notices of Exemption.