

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 18, 2025

EXPLORE THE COAST GRANT PROGRAM – 2025-2026

Project No. 25-018-01

Project Managers: Lexi Caruthers, Irvin Tang, Katya Beener, and Morgan Wright

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration and authorization to disburse up to \$966,316 to 13 nonprofit organizations for projects 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 Sonoma 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).

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Advisory Board Members](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

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 sixty-six thousand three hundred sixteen dollars (\$966,316) to 13 nonprofit organizations for 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 13 projects if the modified projects continue to promote the goal of facilitating and enhancing the public’s opportunities to explore the California coast. The 13 projects are as follows (presented in alphabetical order by the grantee’s name):

1. **Amah Mutsun Land Trust:** Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to provide 60 Amah Mutsun Tribal Band members (youth and their family) with a 7-day summer camp experience on

ancestral coastal lands, fostering cultural revitalization, community connection, and ocean stewardship.

2. **Blue Dot Education:** Ninety-four thousand dollars (\$94,000) to provide 1,000 Imperial Valley residents with 2 types of coastal day trips, consisting of 1) beach trips and 2) tidepool explorations, in San Diego, as well as two community events to celebrate and share experiences through photography, science, and storytelling.
3. **Blue Water Foundation:** Seventeen thousand six hundred dollars (\$17,600) to provide 1,000 underserved youth and adults, including incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, with transformative sailing experiences on the San Francisco Bay to build confidence, leadership, and connection to the water.
4. **California Health Collaborative:** Ninety-nine thousand eight hundred dollars (\$99,800) to provide 300 participants (low-income and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color [BIPOC] youth and their families) from Kings County with 8-10 coastal trips focused on recreation, education, mental health, and intergenerational bonding.
5. **Camp del Corazon:** Sixty-four thousand nine hundred dollars (\$64,900) to provide 375 children with congenital heart disease with a medically supported 5-day summer camp on Catalina Island, featuring water-based recreation and peer connection.
6. **Color the Water:** Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to support 200 participants from Southern California with personalized surf lessons, monthly group surf trips, and wellness workshops to build ocean confidence, community, and belonging.
7. **Grant African Methodist Episcopal Church:** Forty-one thousand five hundred sixteen dollars (\$41,516) to provide 140 underserved community members (youth and their family) from the Watts community with 4-5 one-day coastal trips to locations like Anacapa and Catalina Islands for educational and joyful ocean experiences, including a fishing trip and a semi-submarine boat tour.
8. **LandPaths:** One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 2,167 participants from Sonoma County (youth and their family), primarily Latinx and BIPOC, with immersive coastal field trips and 6 multi-day coastal camping experiences focused on science, cultural relevance, and environmental stewardship.
9. **New Fire Yankuik Xihuitl (dba Seventh Generation Rising):** Ninety-three thousand five hundred dollars (\$93,500) to provide 90 participants from tribal and BIPOC communities with 4 coastal experiences each, including harbor tours, tidepooling, and multi-day camping to promote healing, cultural learning, and leadership.
10. **Outdoor Outreach :** One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 500 low-income youth from San Diego with approximately 160 trauma-informed coastal adventures, including kayaking, surfing, and fishing, aimed at building leadership, confidence, and belonging in coastal spaces.
11. **Puente de la Costa Sur:** Fifty-five thousand dollars (\$55,000) to provide 60 low-income older adults, including coastal farmworkers from San Mateo County, with 6-8 accessible coastal day trips each year for three years, offering opportunities to reduce social isolation,

strengthen community bonds, and enhance well-being through enriching nature-based experiences.

12. **Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living (fiscal sponsor for California Field School):** One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 60 low-income youth from the Bay Area with one 5-day coastal bike tour each to deepen connection to marine environments, cultural history, and environmental stewardship.
13. **Wilderness Youth Project:** One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to provide 1,476 youth from Title 1 schools and early education centers in Santa Barbara County with a combination of 4-hour coastal and nature-based mentoring field trips from September through June, monthly coastal field trips for school day participants, weekly coastal field trips for after-school and early education participants, and a coastal summer camp consisting of one-week day camps. Programs will include activities like tide-pooling, birding, and driftwood construction with a focus on exploration, connection, and mentorship.

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. Any other applicable agreements determined necessary for the project by the 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 \$966,316 to 13 nonprofit organizations for projects that facilitate and enhance the public's opportunities to experience and enjoy the California coast under the Conservancy's Explore the Coast (ETC) grant program. Participant numbers stated in the project summaries are approximate and may vary due to increases in

estimated costs, changes to better serve the participant community, and other programmatic reasons. 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 the following priorities: provide an enjoyable and/or healing experience at the coast and reduce economic, physical, operational, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. Projects may also achieve secondary goals, such as inspiring coastal stewardship, promoting community leadership, and providing lasting positive impact.

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 coastal experiences for people with disabilities and overnight coastal experiences for participants as well as select transportation and attendance costs. This year's ETC grant program solicitation was released in early November 2024; webinars and virtual technical assistance sessions were held in December 2024 and January 2025 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 123 applications, requesting over \$8,804,691 in Conservancy funding. The Conservancy offered a one-week extension to applicants who were impacted by the Los Angeles wildfires that devastated the Southern California region in January 2025. Staff reviewed all 123 applications and forwarded 44 applications to the Advisory Board. Each of the 44 applications was reviewed by at least 3 Advisory Board members. In May and June, the Advisory Board met to discuss and recommend applications to staff. Following this

meeting, staff finalized the list of 13 recommended projects with an average award size of \$74,332.

Staff estimates that the proposed 2025-2026 ETC grant program will engage over 8,400 people through the proposed projects. Of these people, project partners estimate that the program will serve over 6,700 low-income Californians, 7,000 people of color, 660 youth who are houseless or in foster care, approximately 3,200 people for whom English is not their first language, and at least 1,600 people with physical, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities.

Staff recommends funding the following 13 projects for the 2025-2026 ETC grants program. The projects are arranged alphabetically by 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).

AMAH MUTSUN LAND TRUST

\$50,000

Amah Mutsun Land Trust Coastal Stewardship Summer Camp **San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Valley and Sierras, San Joaquin Valley, South Coast**

The Amah Mutsun Land Trust's (AMLT's) Coastal Stewardship Program will provide approximately 60 Amah Mutsun Tribal Band members with one 7-day immersive summer camp experience at culturally significant areas in Mutsun and Awaswas coastal lands. The summer camp program, developed by AMLT, Mutsun teachers, and UCLA Center for Diverse Leadership in Science, will be fine tuned and continue to focus on restoring Mutsun youth's connection to their ancestral coastal homelands and to other Tribal members, and inspiring the next generation of Mutsun ocean stewards. Activities will focus on Mutsun stewardship, native coastal ethnobotany, seashore life, the importance of coastal and river waterways, climate change, native food, recreation, cultural revitalization, traditional culture in everyday life, and ancestry. The week long summer camp may take place at AMLT's Sunlit rukka (house) in Santa Cruz, just 10 minutes from the coast, or at another coastal location, and will include several field trips to coastal locations, such as the Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve in Año Nuevo State Park, Watsonville Slough, Elkhorn Slough, and numerous central coast beaches. Youth will also use AMLT's new lab space at Long's Marine Lab at the U.C. Santa Cruz Coastal Campus. Campers and their families will share meals together throughout the week and have nightly talking circles, providing an opportunity for campers to share and process their experiences in a safe environment and helping to foster a positive Tribal identity.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Año Nuevo State Park, Pescadero State Beach, Bean Hollow State Beach, Sand Hill Bluff, Laguna Creek, Davenport Beach, Watsonville Slough, Elkhorn Slough, and Moss Landing Beach. The proposed project is also 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.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

BLUE DOT EDUCATION

\$94,000

Imperial Valley Coastal Connection

Inland Southern California and Deserts

Blue Dot Education’s Imperial Valley Coastal Connection will provide approximately 1,000 members of the Imperial Valley community with one day trip each. Participants will have the opportunity to choose from one of two types of excursions, offered multiple times throughout the three-year period : 1) beach trips to locations, such as Mission Point Bay Park and Mission Beach, for activities, including snorkeling, stand-up paddleboarding, swimming, yoga, photography, and free-play on the beach; and 2) trips to a tide pool, such as the Scripps La Jolla Tide Pools, led by volunteer scientists and career educators to explore and learn about the intertidal zone and observe marine life, as well as some beach play and sand art. The project also includes two small community celebration events held in the Imperial Valley, where participants will share what they learned from their beach and tide pooling trips with their loved ones, furthering the reach of their coastal experience and inspiring future connection with the coast. The project will serve 70% youth and 30% adults, including parents/guardians, educators, and community members in the Imperial Valley, an area profoundly impacted by poverty, pollution, and high temperatures.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of La Jolla Shores, Mission Point Bay Park, and Mission Beach. The proposed project is also 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.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

BLUE WATER FOUNDATION

\$17,600

Brighter Futures on the Bay

San Francisco Bay Area

The Brighter Futures on the Bay project will provide transformative sailing experiences for 1,000 underserved youth and adults, fostering confidence, leadership, and a sense of connection to the Bay. Participants include incarcerated youth from Alameda County, low-income students from San Francisco Unified School District, unhoused youth from Larkin Street Youth Services, and formerly incarcerated adults. The project will provide all participants with maritime and environmental education. Incarcerated youth will participate in a 10-session program that introduces the basics of sailing, navigation, teamwork, and vessel maintenance. Each sail is accompanied by parole officers of Alameda County that also participate in the program and camaraderie. The program culminates in a Graduation Sail, held twice a year, where participants celebrate their achievements alongside their families, parole officers, and Blue Water Foundation volunteers. Other program participants are offered year-round sailing opportunities through field trips, seasonal programs, and sailing competitions.

Funding: 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 4.5 (San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program) because it improves public access to, within, and around the bay by providing Bay Area 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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

CALIFORNIA HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

\$99,800

Kings Coastal Experiences for Youth

San Joaquin Valley

Through the Kings Coastal Experiences for Youth Project, the California Health Collaborative will provide 8 to 10 coastal experiences to approximately 300 Kings County low-income and/or BIPOC youth and their families. Four youth-only trips will serve 100-125 participants. These trips will focus on supporting youth in building peer-to-peer relationships while they explore the coast together and identify multiple ways the outdoors can support their mental health. The project will serve an additional 175-200 youth and their families through 4-6 one-day and overnight coastal family trips. These trips will prioritize positive family experiences at the coast while helping to establish core memories and deeper connections between children and their parent/guardians. Activities will be designed to provide parents with the opportunity for stress-free, barrier-free, intentional time with their children. All of the coastal trips will include at least one activity from each of three categories: 1) recreational activities on the ocean or beach, including kayaking, paddle boarding, surfing, whale watching, nature hikes or walks, fishing, and/or beach yoga; 2) educational activities, such as boat tours to learn about marine- and wild-life in the area, guided history tours, and/or cultural history chats; and 3) leisure time at piers and boardwalks, exploring caves and tidepools, or just relaxing. To ensure project participants have a more enjoyable and fulfilling experience, they will get the opportunity to be part of the planning process so they can choose the places they most want to visit and activities they would like to participate in. Project participants will also be asked to evaluate the planning, organization, and overall experience of each trip so program staff are able to adjust and improve future trips.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Pismo Beach, Morro Bay, Monterey Shoreline, San Simeon State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, Point Lobos State Park and Natural Reserve, Pebble Beach, and Capitola 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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

CAMP DEL CORAZON

\$64,900

Catalina Island Summer Camp Waterfront Program

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

The Catalina Island Summer Camp Waterfront Program will provide one 5-day camping trip to Catalina Island for approximately 375 children, aged 7-17, with congenital heart disease. Participants will come from throughout the state, but primarily Southern California. Participants will engage in fun, healing activities with continuous medical support to allow participants to fully participate. Activities include swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, sailing, and a penultimate beach party. Participants will connect with nature and each other to build confidence, practice new skills, and forge lasting memories.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Catalina Island Camps' facilities.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

COLOR THE WATER

\$50,000

Surf Support Circles

South Coast, Inland Southern California and Deserts

Color the Water's Surfer Support Circles will support approximately 200 participants with their surfing journey and connection to the ocean during a one year period. Most participants will come from the greater Los Angeles area, and those from the Inland Empire and desert regions. The program's goals are to encourage and support BIPOC surfers. The one-year program will offer individualized and small-group surf lessons designed to meet individuals where they are on their surfing experience. Participants will have access to surfboards and gear, transportation, orientation to surf breaks and beach entry, and fundamental ocean safety instruction. In addition to surfing instructions, the program will host: (1) monthly community gatherings called "Surf Trip Sundays." These events will allow participants to explore the coast together, share knowledge, and build community; and (2) offer on-land wellness workshops at the beach, such

as yoga and meditation. To celebrate and document each surfer's journey, participants will have the option to receive photos and videos of their experiences.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Bruce's Beach Manhattan Beach, Inkwel Santa Monica Beach, Dockweiler Beach, and Venice 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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

GRANT AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

\$41,516

Watts to Water (W2W)

South Coast

The Watts to Water project will provide five one-day trips to various coastal locations for 140 underserved youth and their families who are living in the Watts community in the Los Angeles area. Participants will explore a range of excursions, including a chartered fishing trip to and from Anacapa Island, where families will learn about local wildlife and sustainable fishing practices; and a visit to Catalina Island, where families will board a submarine to observe marine life in the harbor. To extend the impact of each trip, families will receive a take-home packet with photographs from the outings, information about the locations visited, and resources to support future visits. Through this program, participants will be offered joyful, educational, and memorable experiences, and often first-time experiences along the California coast.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Aquarium of the Pacific, Long Beach Harbor, Long Beach, Hooks Landing, Los Angeles Maritime Institute, and Catalina Island.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

LANDPATHS

\$100,000

Coastal Access – Inspired Forward and Vamos Afuera

North Coast

LandPaths will serve approximately 2,167 residents of Sonoma County – primarily low-income, Latinx, and BIPOC youth and families – with transformative outdoor experiences on the California coast, through two programs, Inspired Forward and Vamos Afuera. Through Inspired Forward, 1,807 middle school and high school students and 180 caregivers and educators will join bilingual field leaders on immersive coastal field trips. These full-day experiences include hands-on science learning aligned with Next Generation Science Standards, coastal hikes, and tidepool exploration. For many youth, these trips represent their first ever visit to the coast, building a sense of connection and confidence in outdoor spaces.

The Vamos Afuera program will engage 180 Latinx participants in 6 multi-day, family-centered coastal camping trips. Families will explore locations like Point Reyes and Stillwater Cove while learning essential outdoor skills, such as gear use, beach safety, and environmental stewardship. Activities are designed to foster joy and belonging in nature through culturally relevant programming led by bilingual staff. Across both programs, participants will take part in Coastal Cleanup Days and gain meaningful opportunities to care for the coastline, fostering leadership and a sense of community responsibility.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Sonoma Coast State Park, Shell Beach, Bodega Dunes, Point Reyes National Seashore, and Gualala Point Regional Park. The proposed project is also 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.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

NEW FIRE YANKUIK XIHUITL (DBA SEVENTH GENERATION RISING)

\$93,500

Seventh Generation Rising Coastal Exploration Project **North Coast, San Francisco Bay Area,
Sacramento Valley and Sierras,
Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley,
South Coast**

The Coastal Exploration Project will serve approximately 90 participants, consisting of three 30-person cohorts of youth and their families, with 4 coastal experiences each. Participants will come from low-income, tribal, and communities of color from the Bay Area and Central Coast Regions. Coastal experiences consist of Harbor Education Trips where participants will visit the historic Western Flyer in Moss Landing and learn ocean science, harbor history and ecology, and ancestral relationships to coastal waters; Coastal and Intertidal Wetland Exploration where participants will explore the Elkhorn Slough on an electric catamaran; Tidepool Exploration and Shoreline Activities where youth and families will identify marine species and gather edible kelp; and Multi-Day Coastal Camping where participants will forage and prepare traditional meals, participate in elder-led ceremony, and a leadership opportunity for youth to take on roles as facilitators. The program is free for participants and provides transportation, meals, and supplies to create a space for intergenerational experiences that are educational and healing.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Moss Landing Harbor and the Elkhorn Slough Ecological Reserve.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

OUTDOOR OUTREACH

\$100,000

Coastal Adventure Club

South Coast

Outdoor Outreach will provide approximately 160 coastal outings for approximately 500 youth ages 9-24 from low-income communities in San Diego over the proposed 2-year grant term. The project will help youth access and build a connection to the coastal spaces and provide day trips to locations throughout the San Diego County coastline. Project activities include kayak lessons in Coronado Tidelands Park, exploring the San Diego Bay's ecosystems through fishing in

National City and Chula Vista, and surfing at Scripps Coastal Reserve. As part of their trauma-informed approach, field instructors will lead introductory discussions and assure participants that their participation is by choice and at their own pace. During each outing, groups will be sized with enough instructors to allow participants to feel well-supported to enjoy their surroundings safely. Afterwards, participants and staff will share highlights of the experience. Participants may be able to go on multiple outings to experience a variety of new coastal locations and activities. The project aims for youth to feel a true sense of belonging and leadership in these coastal outdoor spaces.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Scripps Coastal Reserve, Seaside State Beach, La Jolla Shores, Mission Beach, Mission Point Park, Naval Training Center Park, Cabrillo National Monument, Pepper Park, Sweetwater Marsh Reserve, J-Street Pier, and Bayshore Bikeway.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

PUENTE DE LA COSTA SUR

\$55,000

60+ Coastside Connection

San Francisco Bay Area

Puente de la Costa Sur will bring approximately 60 low-income older adults from the rural South Coast of San Mateo County, including farmworkers and former farmworkers from Pescadero, La Honda, Loma Mar, and San Gregorio, to the coast for six to eight field trips per participant per year over three years. Participants will visit scenic and accessible coastal locations in San Mateo, San Francisco, and Santa Cruz counties. Each trip will include gentle hikes guided by park staff or local docents and shared meals at nearby restaurants, creating a welcoming and social experience for participants who often face isolation.

These trips offer a rare and healing opportunity for older adults who rarely get to enjoy the coastline due to poverty, lack of transportation, language barriers, and geographic isolation. The program fosters meaningful peer connection and social engagement in nature, helping participants build a sense of belonging and well-being. Leadership opportunities arise organically as returning participants often help orient new attendees and take active roles in group outings. Puente’s broader 60+ program connects participants with essential services, and

this expansion ensures they also experience joy, connection, and the beauty of their nearby coastal environment.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of areas outside the San Francisco Bay, such as Devil’s Slide Trail, Cowell-Purisima Coast Trail, California Coastal Trail, Pigeon Point Lighthouse, Año Nuevo State Park, and Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Museum of Natural History.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

SANTA CRUZ HUB FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING (FISCAL SPONSOR FOR CALIFORNIA FIELD SCHOOL) \$100,000

California’s Changing Coast Bike Touring Camps San Francisco Bay Area

California Field School will provide bike tours to approximately 60 low-income high school students from the San Francisco Bay Area. Each of the four 5-day, 4-night bike tours will host approximately 15 participants, who will cycle from San Francisco to Santa Cruz, with stops along the way at marine preserves, coastal farms/ranches, and state beaches. Participants will have the opportunity to learn from indigenous communities, kayak, tide-pool, and enjoy the coastal night sky. By moving at bicycle speed, participants experience the coast intimately, developing a deep appreciation for its natural and cultural heritage. This slower pace, combined with time for solo and group reflection, allows the participants to process their experiences and form lasting connections to California's coastal environments. Upon completion of the program, participants can continue to access bikes through the California Field School’s bike library or through earn-a-bike programs at partnering bike shops.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves areas outside the San Francisco Bay and operation of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the California Coastal Trail, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Half Moon Bay State Beach, San Gregorio State Beach, Año Nuevo State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, New Brighton State Beach, and Elkhorn Slough State Marine Conservation Area. The proposed project is also 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) because it improves public access to, within, and around the bay by providing Bay Area 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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or no expansion of use.

WILDERNESS YOUTH PROJECT

\$100,000

Bridge to Nature

Central Coast

Wilderness Youth Project will provide accessible coastal experiences to approximately 1,476 (738 annually) marginalized youth ages 3-17 across Santa Barbara, Goleta, and Carpinteria over the two-year grant term. The project is directly embedded into 15 Title 1 schools, afterschool sites, and early education centers that serve majority Latinx, low-income youth. The project is offered at no cost to participants. During the school year, participants will have the opportunity to attend weekly or monthly nature-based mentoring field trips to South Santa Barbara County beaches and mesas where they can play and explore. On these trips, participants are divided into small groups of 16 or fewer where they can connect with each other, build supportive relationships with project staff mentors, and develop a lasting connection with their natural surroundings. School day participants attend field trips once a month, after-school participants attend field trips once a week. Participants can choose from a variety of beach activities, including tide-pooling, birding, observing nature, and learning about the Santa Barbara Channel. Further, this project also offers summer camps to participants where they can continue beach recreation outside of the school calendar.

Funding: The proposed project is consistent with the use of Coastal Access Account funds because it involves operation of Tajiguas Beach, Haskell’s Beach, Ellwood Mesa, Goleta Beach, and Hendry’s Beach. The proposed project is also 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.

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 operation of existing coastal facilities with negligible or 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 8,400 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 \$2.9 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.

California Native American tribes and indigenous tribal communities continue to be a priority under the Explore the Coast grants program. Project partners serving these communities collaborate closely with tribal members to facilitate access to ancestral coastal lands, support traditional stewardship and leadership development, and foster intergenerational knowledge sharing rooted in Indigenous ecological practices. Several projects will serve Native American participants, including the following two that specifically engage tribal citizens and Indigenous youth:

1. Amah Mutsun Land Trust’s Coastal Stewardship Summer Camp, which provides immersive cultural and environmental education experiences for Amah Mutsun Tribal Band youth and their families on ancestral coastal lands; and

2. Seventh Generation Rising Coastal Exploration Project, serving youth and families from tribal and communities of color in the Bay Area and Central Coast regions through intergenerational coastal experiences that integrate traditional foodways, ceremonies, and leadership opportunities.

These projects exemplify a commitment to honoring Indigenous sovereignty and cultivating strong, place-based connections to the coast.

4. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

While the primary objective of the ETC grants program is to provide Californians with 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. The projects will reduce geographic barriers for coastal and inland communities through subsidized transportation and will reduce physical barriers by providing coastal experiences for people 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 outdoor recreation fields.

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 2025-2026 ETC program. It is estimated that over 8,400 people will be served by the 13 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

Coastal Conservancy	\$966,316
Others (leveraged funds excluding in-kind)	\$2,934,740
Project Total	\$3,901,056

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 shoreline of the sea, excluding the San Francisco Bay. Use of the Coastal Access Account funds is appropriate for the proposed projects listed below because each will develop, maintain, or operate an existing facility that provides access to the coast outside the San Francisco Bay. Please refer to the "Project Summary" section, above, for more information on the specific facility(ies) associated with each proposed project.

- Amah Mutsun Land Trust (Amah Mutsun Land Trust Coastal Stewardship Summer Camp)
- Blue Dot Education (Imperial Valley Coastal Connection)
- California Health Collaborative (Kings Coastal Experiences for Youth)
- Camp del Corazon (Catalina Island Summer Camp Waterfront Program)
- Color the Water (Surf Support Circles)
- Grant African Episcopal Church (Watts to Water, W2W)
- Landpaths (Coastal Access – Inspired Forward and Vamos Afuera)
- New Fire Yankuik Xihuitl (dba Seventh Generation Rising) (Seventh Generation Rising Coastal Exploration Project)
- Outdoor Outreach (Coastal Adventure Club)
- Puente De La Costa Sur (60+ Coastside Connection)
- Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living (Fiscal Sponsor for California Field School) (California's Changing Coast Bike Touring Camps)
- Wilderness Youth Project (Bridge to Nature)

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 for certain types of entities, including private nonprofit environmental and land acquisition organizations and private research organizations, 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 projects listed below, which include 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.

- Amah Mutsun Land Trust (Amah Mutsun Land Trust Coastal Stewardship Summer Camp)

- Blue Water Foundation (Brighter Futures on the Bay)
- Blue Dot Education (Imperial Valley Coastal Connection)
- Landpaths (Coastal Access – Inspired Forward and Vamos Afuera)
- Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living (Fiscal Sponsor for California Field School) (California’s Changing Coast Bike Touring Camps)
- Wilderness Youth Project (Bridge to Nature)

Project partners will leverage approximately \$2.9 million in other funds for the 2025-2026 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 13 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, consistent with the rights of private property owners and without having a significant adverse impact on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife, through 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 because it helps to achieve at least one of these goals, as more particularly described in the “Project Summary” section, above.

- Blue Water Foundation (Brighter Futures on the Bay)
- Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living (Fiscal Sponsor for California Field School) (California’s Changing Coast Bike Touring Camps)

Chapter 9: System of Public Accessways

Twelve of the proposed projects listed below 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.

- Amah Mutsun Land Trust (Amah Mutsun Land Trust Coastal Stewardship Summer Camp)
- Blue Dot Education (Imperial Valley Coastal Connection)
- California Health Collaborative (Kings Coastal Experiences for Youth)
- Camp del Corazon (Catalina Island Summer Camp Waterfront Program)
- Color the Water (Surf Support Circles)
- Grant African Episcopal Church (Watts to Water, W2W)
- Landpaths (Coastal Access – Inspired Forward and Vamos Afuera)
- New Fire Yankuik Xihuitl (dba Seventh Generation Rising) (Seventh Generation Rising Coastal Exploration Project)
- Outdoor Outreach (Coastal Adventure Club)
- Puente De La Costa Sur (60+ Coastside Connection)
- Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living (Fiscal Sponsor for California Field School) (California’s Changing Coast Bike Touring Camps)
- Wilderness Youth Project (Bridge to Nature)

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 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 13 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 13 proposed projects directly benefit one or more systemically excluded communities.
- **Goal 2.1:** The 13 proposed projects provide enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

Conservancy staff reviewed the 13 proposed projects for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, Sections 21000-21189.91 and its implementing regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000-15387)). All the proposed projects are categorically exempt under Section 15301 (Existing Facilities), which exempts the operation of existing facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, including pedestrian trails (Section 15301(c)). 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.