



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0122, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Regional Parks
Staff Name and Phone Number: Mark Cleveland, 707-565-3349
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Fifth

Title:

North Coast Trails Project

Recommended Action:

Resolution adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the North Coast Trails Project and approving the Project (Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

Regional Parks has prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the North Coast Trails Project ("Project") to develop the California Coastal Trail along the spectacular Sonoma Coast. The Project consists of two separate trail segments totaling approximately 2 miles that will be constructed on public access easements deeded to the County. Both trail segments are located between the ocean and Highway 1. The first segment is the Kashia Coastal Reserve Trail, which is approximately 1.1 miles long and is located north of Salt Point State Park. The second segment is the Stewarts Point Ranch Trail, which is approximately 0.9 miles long and is located on the coastal parcel north of Stewarts Point General Store. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the Project. During the public comment review period, comments were received and as a result minor modifications were made to the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. None of the comments received, the responses provided, or minor changes to the document affected the conclusions of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Regional Parks recommends the Board approve the resolution adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the North Coast Trails Project and approve the Project.

Discussion:

Currently there is no public trail access along the six miles of coast between Salt Point State Park and Regional Parks' Black Point Coastal Access Trail at the Sea Ranch. This Project will provide 2 miles of public trail access in this area, along with trailhead parking, picnic sites, bridges and other drainage crossings, interpretive signs, gates, fencing, and a restroom. The State Coastal Act and the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan call for the creation of the 1,200 mile California Coastal Trail ("CCT") from Oregon to Mexico. This Project fulfills part of that objective and will become part of the CCT system when complete. The Project and the public access easements do not provide beach access, which is available at both Salt Point State Park and Black Point Coastal Access Trail.

The Project has been developed in partnership with the California Coastal Conservancy ("Conservancy"), the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District ("District"), the Kashia Band of Pomo

Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, the Save the Redwoods League, and Regional Parks. Both the Conservancy and the District provided grant funding for preparation of the Trail and Facilities Plan and the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and will be providing critical funding for implementation of the Project. Regional Parks is collaborating with the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria to protect culturally significant resources, coordinate interpretative signage, and coordinate tribal ceremonial access at both trails.

Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration:

The Project includes the implementation of a Trail and Facilities Plan (Trail Plan), with trail designs and alignments based on partner collaboration, environmental and cultural resource protection, geotechnical conditions, stakeholder and community engagement, and other factors.

Potential impacts associated with the Trail Plan have been identified in the Initial Study, along with mitigation measures to reduce the impacts to less than significant. Although the trail is aligned to minimize impacts, the coastal terrace has extensive perennial and seasonal wetlands that must be traversed. As such, the primary impacts are to coastal wetlands, and the majority of the mitigation measures are directly related to trail development. The specific areas addressed and where mitigation measures will be implemented are: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Public Services, Recreation, and Transportation. In total there are thirty-eight mitigation measures included in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, and in the Mitigation & Monitoring Plan for the Project.

On August 10, 2021, the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (“MND”) was presented to the Sonoma County Environmental Review Committee (“ERC”) to make a determination regarding the type and adequacy of the document to be prepared pursuant to CEQA. The ERC requested some minor changes to the document, and once these changes were made, determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration was the appropriate CEQA document for this project.

Regional Parks prepared the MND and submitted it to the State Clearinghouse for public review. The 30-day public review period pursuant to CEQA occurred from October 21, 2021 to November 29, 2021. Regional Parks received letter comments from the California Coastal Commission, and email comments from the District on the proposed project and MND. Regional Parks responded to all comments received and it was concluded that there were no significant changes that affected the MND.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Prior Board Actions:

June 8, 2021, received the County of Sonoma Capital Project Plan 2021-2026, including subject Kashia Coastal Trail and Stewarts Point Trail Projects.

June 20, 2017, by Resolution Nos. 17-0252 and 17-0253 authorized the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District’s (District) General Manager and County’s Director of Regional Parks to execute a funding agreement for planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of California Coastal Trail segments on the Kashia Coastal Reserve and on Stewarts Point Ranch. Additionally, by Resolution No. 17-0254, authorized the Director of Regional Parks to accept a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy for planning these trail

segments.

August 16, 2016, by Resolution No. 16-0306 the District's Board of Directors approved acquisition of a conservation easement and recreation covenant over the Stewarts Point Ranch and, by Resolution No. 16-0309, the Board of Supervisors approved the County's acquisition of a trail easement on a coastal portion of the Stewarts Point Ranch.

October 13, 2015, by Resolution No. 15-0411, the District's Board of Directors approved acquisition of a conservation easement over the Kashia Coastal Reserve and, by Resolution No. 15-0412, the Board of Supervisors approved the County's acquisition of a trail easement on a coastal portion of the Kashia Coastal Reserve and executed an Easement Agreement.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

Resolution

Map of Project Location

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

Notice of Intent to Adopt an Initial Study - Mitigated Negative Declaration

Notice of Completion