



City of Chula Vista

Staff Report

File#: 17-0414, **Item#:** 5.

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-185 OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHULA VISTA AUTHORIZING THE SUBMITTAL OF AN APPLICATION FOR A HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM GRANT, WILDLIFE AREA ACTIVITIES, FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION OFFICE OF GRANTS AND LOCAL SERVICES, AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE A STANDARD AGREEMENT IF SELECTED FOR SUCH FUNDING, ANY AMENDMENTS THERETO, AND ANY RELATED DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRANT

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Council adopt the resolution.

SUMMARY

The State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Grants and Local Services released a notice of funding availability for the Habitat Conservation Fund Program. This program provides funding for projects that protect rapidly disappearing wildlife habitats that support California's unique and varied wildlife resources. The Wildlife Area Activities Projects are defined as an event, or series of events to be accomplished with grant funds, such as a nature interpretation, educational, or other enrichment project, (e.g., classes, trips, etc.), organized and/or conducted by the grantee, and intended to bring urban residents into park and/or wildlife areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental Notice

The activity is not a "Project" as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required.

Environmental Determination

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a "Project" as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines because the proposed action consists of a governmental fiscal activity which, on its own, would not result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. However, when the actual project(s) for which the grant monies are earmarked are adequately defined and ready to be carried out, the appropriate environmental review and documentation will be required. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Not Applicable

DISCUSSION

Protecting, restoring, and enhancing wildlife habitat and fisheries are vital to maintain California's quality of life. The impacts of the increase in the state's human population results in an urgent need to fund projects that protect rapidly disappearing wildlife habitats that support California's unique and varied wildlife resources.

In response to this need, the people of California voted to enact the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990, Chapter 9, Fish and Game Code, which largely defines the Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) Program.

There are seven eligible project categories: habitats for deer/mountain lions, rare, endangered, threatened, or fully protected species, wetlands, anadromous salmonids and trout, and riparian, trails, and wildlife area activities.

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In partnership with the City of Chula Vista, the Living Coast Discovery Center will create a community program to encourage urban families to hike, explore, and protect local habitats and wildlife. HELP (Hike, Explore, Learn, Protect) Chula Vista will conduct 120 interpretive hike programs and 48 community clean-up projects and serve up to 4,200 people (approximately 500 different families) from underserved communities over four years.

Based on the program, the City is requesting up to \$100,000 in grant funds.

The City's promotional campaign, "This Is Chula", encourages residents and visitors to eat, work, and play in Chula Vista, the second-largest city in the San Diego metropolitan area. HELP Chula Vista will challenge families to explore the local parks and open spaces and provide interpretation programs on relevant environmental topics through guided hikes and community clean-up projects.

- **Guided interpretive hikes** will take place at Sweetwater Marsh, where the Living Coast is located, and in several locations throughout Chula Vista including Otay Valley Regional Park, Rice Canyon, Mother Miguel, and Morrison Pond. The Living Coast will conduct 48 programs onsite at Sweetwater Marsh and 72 programs offsite at other locations in Chula Vista. This program will serve up to 3,000 people.
- **Community clean-up** projects will take place at several locations in Chula Vista including D Street Fill, J Street Marina, and Sweetwater River. The Living Coast will conduct 48 community clean-up projects, engaging up to 1,200 people and removing approximately 24,000 pounds of debris from local parks and waterways.

Today, more than 80 percent of American families live in urban areas, and many lack easy access to safe outdoor spaces, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior. At the same time, kids are spending more hours than ever before in front of screens instead of outside. Providing opportunities

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for students and families to spend time outdoors allows them to experience the natural world around them and inspires positive attitudes towards the environment.

To encourage community participation, the Living Coast will create a “challenge” for families to attend three hikes and one clean-up project. The Living Coast will monitor attendance as part of its program evaluation and award certificates of completion after a family has finished the challenge. Families will receive a family four-pack to visit the Living Coast Discovery Center, a non-profit zoo and aquarium.

HELP Chula Vista builds on existing programs and partnerships currently conducted by the Living Coast Discovery Center and the City of Chula Vista, including a five-year grant awarded to the Living Coast by the Port of San Diego and ongoing collaborative programs with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the City Council and has found no property holdings with 500 feet of the boundaries of the property which is subject of this action. Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any Councilmember, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision maker conflict of interest in this manner.

LINK TO STRATEGIC GOALS

The City's Strategic Plan has five major goals: Operational Excellence, Economic Vitality, Healthy Community, Strong and Secure Neighborhoods and a Connected Community. This action supports the goals of a Healthy Community and a Connected Community by connecting the community to park and open space in healthy activities. It also supports the goal of Strong and Secure Neighborhoods by providing new opportunities for the community to utilize public facilities in a positive and safe way.

CURRENT YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

If awarded, these grant funds will allow the City to appropriate funds to the Living Coast Discovery Center to provide the activities identified in the Project Proposal. Match funding is provided by a grant to the Living Coast Discovery Center from the Unified Port of San Diego. Grant awards are not expected to occur in the current fiscal year.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

If awarded, staff will return to Council to appropriate grant funds.

ATTACHMENT

1. Project Proposal
2. Project Location Map

Staff Contact: Tim Farmer, Principal Recreation Manager