CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

W44b

DATE: August 30, 2013

TO: Commissioners and Interested Parties

FROM: Charles Lester, Executive Director
                Susan Hansch, Chief Deputy Director
                Christiane Parry, Public Education Program Manager
                Sylvie Lee, Grants Program Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Modifications to guidelines for WHALE TAIL® Competitive Grants (for Coastal Commission Meeting on September 11, 2013).** The Executive Director recommends that the Coastal Commission approve several minor modifications to the guidelines for the WHALE TAIL® Grants Program.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the following changes to the WHALE TAIL® grant guidelines:

(1)   A. Eliminate the goal of funding projects that are "potentially expandable or applicable in other geographic areas."
      B. Replace it with the goal of funding projects that "could potentially be expanded or continued after the grant ends, and/or build organizational or audience capacity."

(2)   A. Eliminate awarding extra credit for a project that "seems likely to continue after the grant has ended."
      B. Replace it with awarding extra credit for a project that "will have a ripple effect beyond itself, by providing tools or knowledge to others in the field, advancing the field into new areas, or building collaborations with other entities."

(3)   Add a new subcategory for projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification. This new subcategory would be piloted for two years and then continued upon the discretion of the Executive Director.

(4)   Add very minor language clarifying criteria that already exist.

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

> *I move that the Commission authorize the modifications to the guidelines for the WHALE TAIL® Competitive Grants Program as described in the staff report dated August 19, 2013, Item W35b.*

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the foregoing motion. Passage of this motion will result in authorization of Coastal Commission staff to begin using the modified selection criteria when soliciting proposals in Fall 2013. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution:

> *The Commission hereby approves the newly modified guidelines for WHALE TAIL® grants as described in the staff report dated August 19, 2013, Item W35b.*

II. INTRODUCTION

The California Coastal Commission's WHALE TAIL® License Plate was established as a mechanism through which the public can contribute funds to coastal and marine education programs in California. Proceeds from the sales of the plates benefit the Coastal Commission's Public Education programs throughout the state. A large portion of the funds received by the Coastal Commission are redistributed through local assistance grants to nonprofit organizations, schools, and local governments. Some of these local assistance funds are awarded as targeted grants through recommendations to Commissioners by the staff, and the rest of the local assistance funds are awarded through a competitive grants process. The Commission approved guidelines for the competitive grants program in 1998 and approved a minor modification in 2009 to add criteria about age-appropriateness of educational content.

Altering the goal of supporting model programs that are geographically expandable

When the guidelines for the WHALE TAIL® grants were first established in 1998, one of the goals of the program was to support activities that could serve as model projects to be replicated elsewhere. The idea was to invest in projects that went beyond the particulars of the project itself by helping inform the growth of the field. It has come to the attention of Commission staff that while many strong proposals are submitted every year, it is actually quite rare to receive one from an organization that has both a mission and the capacity to replicate its programs in other areas. Most nonprofit organizations, schools, and local government agencies aim to do good work in a focused geographic area. In addition, geographic expansion is only one way that a project may build capacity or support the dispersion of good ideas. In recognition of this reality and to reflect a broader definition of capacity building, the staff is proposing two changes to our guidelines.

First, we propose to drop the preference for geographically expandable projects and replace it with a broader preference for projects that will expand or continue or build capacity for the future. Second, with the above proposed change as part of the guidelines, it would be redundant to continue awarding extra credit for projects that would continue in the future. The extra credit portion of the guidelines is also an appropriate place to address the way that a project may

benefit other entities and/or the marine education field as a whole. Therefore, the staff is proposing to award extra credit instead for projects that would benefit the larger field or other organizations outside and beyond the grantee and its own project.

Adding a subcategory for climate change and/or ocean acidification

The Coastal Commission's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan includes *Goal 3: Address Climate Change through LCP Planning, Coastal Permitting, Inter-Agency Collaboration, and Public Education."* To help address this goal, as well as an overall scarcity of grant proposals the Commission's Public Education Program normally receives pertaining to global climate change and ocean acidification, the staff is proposing a new subcategory for the WHALE TAIL® competitive grants for projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification. The staff proposes that this special subcategory would be piloted for two years and then would continue upon the discretion of the Executive Director.

III. Staff Recommendations for WHALE TAIL® Grant Guidelines

The staff recommends that the following changes be made to the WHALE TAIL® grant guidelines so they would read as follows:

> **Categories of Grants:** The WHALE TAIL® Grants Program will fund projects that fall into any one of the following three categories: 1) Adopt-A-Beach programs; 2) youth programs; 3) programs for the general public. <u>For the 2013/14 and 2014/15 grant cycles, we will have a special subcategory for projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification</u>.

> CRITERIA FOR SELECTING GRANT RECIPIENTS

> **1. Educational Component (25 points):** Projects funded under this program should have a strong, high-quality educational component involving the marine or coastal environment. We encourage experiential, hands-on learning <u>and incorporation of stewardship,</u> where possible. The project's educational content and mode of delivery should be age-appropriate for the target audience. Projects aiming to improve the quality of beaches or other coastal habitats will be considered as well.

> **2. Need (15 points):** <u>Projects will be assessed on the degree to which they address an identified need (educational, ecological, social, etc.).</u> Projects that reach audiences in underserved communities, including multicultural and inland areas, are especially encouraged.

> **3. Project Concept (30 points):** We seek <u>thoughtfully developed ideas, technically</u> sound concepts, and creative and innovative approaches ~~that are potentially expandable or applicable in other geographic areas~~. <u>The degree to which a project could potentially be expanded or continued after the grant ends, and/or build organizational or audience capacity, will be considered. The degree of impact relative to the cost will also be evaluated.</u> Up to 5 points of extra credit will be awarded if the project ~~seems likely to continue after the grant has ended~~ <u>will have a ripple effect beyond itself, by providing tools or knowledge to others in the field, advancing the field into new areas, or building collaborations with other entities.</u>

4. Proposal Content (30 points): The proposal should demonstrate that the concept has been fully thought out and developed into a concrete, feasible project with clearly stated goals, measurable objectives, project design, and method of implementation. A ~~method~~ sensible plan for evaluating the project's success should be included, as should detailed and accurate cost information. The likelihood of the project's successful completion will be considered, as well as the strength of the organization's track record and capabilities of project personnel.