

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Date: August 19, 2021

To: Commissioners and Interested Parties

From: John Ainsworth, Executive Director
Sarah Christie, Legislative Director
Christiane Parry, Public Education Program Manager
Annie Kohut Frankel, Grants and Education Programs Coordinator

Subject: **Proposed Targeted WHALE TAIL® Grants for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 from the Commission's Public Education Program.**
The Executive Director recommends that the Commission approve the following proposed targeted grants for Fiscal Year 2021/2022.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- A. Approve targeted grants for the following five projects (totaling \$476,231):
- 1) Justice Outside (\$73,026)
 - 2) Kids' Adopt-A-Beach School Program (\$154,205)
 - 3) Heal the Bay Adopt-A-Beach Program (\$50,000)
 - 4) I Love A Clean San Diego Adopt-A-Beach Program (\$30,000)
 - 5) Tides Center (\$169,000)
- B. Approve a temporary reserve to remain unallocated at this time and awarded later in the fiscal year (\$30,000)
- C. Approve the following actions:
- 1) Reallocate any unneeded targeted grant funds to the temporary reserve.
 - 2) Allocate temporary reserve funds to one or more of the above targeted grants if reserve is not otherwise needed and recommended funding levels turn out to be insufficient.

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

I move that the Commission **approve** the funding allocations set forth in the staff recommendation.

Staff Recommendation of Approval:

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the foregoing motion. Passage of this motion will result in authorization of the Executive Director or his designee to enter into the appropriate agreements for disbursing the available funds. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution to Approve the Permit:

The Commission hereby approves and authorizes the Executive Director or his designee to:

- a. enter into the appropriate contracts for five targeted projects
- b. set aside a temporary reserve of \$30,000
- c. reallocate any unneeded targeted grant funds currently being approved to the temporary reserve
- d. increase targeted grant amounts if necessary using temporary reserve funds

II. INTRODUCTION

The Commission's WHALE TAIL® Grants support projects that educate and involve the public in the protection of marine and coastal resources. These projects provide important benefits in advancing public understanding and support for the coast and ocean. Targeted grants are high priority projects that are linked to existing Commission programs and the goals identified in the Commission's Strategic Plan. Funding for the WHALE TAIL® Grants Program comes from sales and renewals of the California WHALE TAIL® License Plate (into the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account), and voluntary contributions to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund on the State tax form. In 2021, additional funds were allocated from the General Fund for this program through the state budget. The targeted grants recommended in this staff report would be funded by the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund and the General Fund allocation.

Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund

The Protect our Coast and Oceans "check box" on the California State tax form was created pursuant to legislation authored in 2013 by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi and renewed in 2017 by State Senator Josh Newman. Per Article 5.1 (Sections 18745-18748) that was added to Chapter 3 of the Revenue and Taxation Code:

WHALE TAIL® Grants

“All money designated under the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund space on a tax return ... shall be allocated as follows:

(a) To the Franchise Tax Board and the Controller for reimbursement of all costs incurred by the Franchise Tax Board and the Controller in connection with their duties under this article.

(b) (1) To the California Coastal Commission to support eligible programs awarded grants under the selection criteria established by the California Coastal Commission for the Whale Tail Grants Program, and for direct program-related expenses.”

In January 2014, California taxpayers began making voluntary contributions to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund while completing their state tax returns. As of July 31, 2021, \$2,598,524 has been donated to this fund

General Fund Allocation to Whale Tail Grants

The FY2021/2022 budget allocated \$10 million of local assistance funding to the Commission for Whale Tail Grants, which must be encumbered by the end of FY2025. Due to the time limit on the use of these funds, they are used in preference to the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Account for this grant cycle.

Public Education Grantmaking Budget and Timetable

Staff proposes to spend \$476,231 on targeted grants at this time, with \$154,205 from the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund and \$322,026 from the General Fund local assistance allocation. Staff proposes to spend \$1,500,000 from the General Fund on competitive grants in FY2021/2022, which are expected to come before the commission for action in February 2022 following advertisement of the availability of grant funds and review of all submitted proposals.

The staff further proposes to allocate \$30,000 to a temporary reserve.

III. APPROVAL OF TARGETED GRANTS FOR FIVE PROJECTS

The staff recommends five projects for immediate funding. These projects are consistent with the legislative requirements and with the criteria applied to the competitive grants program. The grants will be subject to the same reporting requirements and rules as set forth for the WHALE TAIL® competitive grants.

The projects proposed for grant funding comprise ongoing educational efforts, stewardship activities to curb plastic pollution, restoration of coastal habitat, and support for WHALE TAIL® grantees on environmental equity and cultural relevancy.

The staff is requesting approval of grants for the following projects:

- 1) Kids' Ocean Day Adopt-A-Beach School Program and Beach Fieldtrip (\$154,205)
Funds would be awarded to Friends of the Dunes, Marine Science Institute, Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education, Orange County Coastkeeper, I Love A Clean San Diego, Community Action Partnership of Kern, and National Fisheries Conservation Center.
- 2) Justice Outside (\$73,026)
- 3) Heal the Bay Adopt-A-Beach Program (\$50,000)
- 4) I Love A Clean San Diego Adopt-A-Beach Program (\$30,000)
- 5) Tides Center Marine Education Project (\$169,000)

The staff recommends that the grants listed above be funded from the following sources:

General Fund for a total of \$322,026

- Justice Outside \$73,026
- Heal the Bay \$50,000
- I Love A Clean San Diego \$30,000
- Tides Center \$169,000

Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund for a total of \$154,205

- Kids' Ocean Day School Programs \$154,205

1. \$73,026 FOR JUSTICE OUTSIDE

Justice Outside is a nonprofit organization that funds outdoor programming, leads training programs that foster culturally relevant programs, and advises on efforts to enhance equity in philanthropy.

Program History. Since FY2017/18, the Coastal Commission has granted funds to Justice Outside (formerly Youth Outside) to hold trainings on pursuing equity and inclusion in environmental education for WHALE TAIL® Grant recipients, including stipends for participating organizations. In 2020, Justice Outside received funds to evaluate and improve the equity and accessibility of the competitive WHALE TAIL® Grants application process.

Proposal. Staff proposes \$73,026 for Justice Outside to offer trainings for WHALE TAIL® grantees, including participant stipends, with opportunities for individual coaching. The trainings will focus on social and environmental justice to help program leaders and their broader organizations develop and implement more equitable programs. Prior to the trainings, grantees will be surveyed on their needs so that the trainings can be tailored for them.

2. \$154,205 FOR KIDS' OCEAN DAY ADOPT-A-BEACH SCHOOL PROGRAM

This program engages low-income schools from coastal and inland communities and involves upwards of 8,000 children a year. The program was started in Los Angeles County in 1993 by the Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education with the support of the Coastal Commission, and has expanded into five additional locations,

coordinated by separate partner grantees: San Diego (I Love a Clean San Diego), Orange County (Orange County Coastkeeper), Kern County (Community Action Partnership of Kern), San Francisco Bay Area (Marine Science Institute), and Humboldt Bay (Friends of the Dunes). The program includes a school assembly or classroom presentation and discussion of watersheds and the storm drain system, waste and litter reduction strategies, and the dangers of marine debris. Teachers are provided with additional related activities to conduct with their classes. At the end of the school year, students enjoy a field trip coinciding with World Oceans Day to play at the beach, participate in a beach cleanup, and create an aerial art display by standing in formation to spell out an ocean conservation message which is photographed from above. Art coordination is funded through a grant to the National Fisheries Conservation Center.

Program History. The Commission took this Los Angeles-based program statewide by expanding to the San Francisco Bay area in 1998, to San Diego in 1999, to Humboldt County in 2002, to Orange County in 2003. The Commission launched a central valley component to the program in 2001. From 2001 to 2018, students from Fresno County traveled to Monterey Bay, and from 2003 to 2008, students from, Tulare County traveled to the coast in San Luis Obispo County. In 2019, students from Kern County traveled to San Luis Obispo County. In 2020, assemblies were suspended and beach events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2020/21 schoolyear, presentations were held virtually, and students created artwork that was incorporated into an online picture mosaic and video for their culminating project.

Proposal. For FY2021/22, the staff proposes a total of \$154,205 to continue programs in San Diego, Orange County, San Francisco Bay Area, Kern County, and Humboldt Bay. Assemblies will be held in person or virtually, depending on conditions and school guidelines. If conditions allow, beach field trips and aerial art will take place in the spring. Funds are included for additional buses, to be used if needed to comply with local physical distancing rules. Grants would be made as follows:

Friends of the Dunes, \$19,000
Marine Science Institute, \$30,000
Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education, \$26,000
Orange County Coastkeeper, \$28,330
I Love A Clean San Diego, \$25,000
Community Action Partnership of Kern, \$8,000
National Fisheries Conservation Center, \$17,875

3. **\$50,000 FOR HEAL THE BAY'S ADOPT-A-BEACH PROGRAM**

Heal the Bay serves as the coordinator for both the Adopt-A-Beach Program and Coastal Cleanup Day for Los Angeles County. As the coordinator of the Adopt-A-Beach program, the organization arranges cleanups and provides supplies for hundreds of groups of volunteers committed to cleaning a beach three times. Heal the Bay also hosts monthly zero-waste "Nothin' But Sand" public cleanup events and maintains an interactive database of cleanup data.

During the upcoming year Heal the Bay will focus on expanding accessibility and inclusive programming as part of their ongoing coordination of Adopt-A-Beach. They will conduct a programmatic study of current and past Adopt-A-Beach participants to understand needs and opportunities for growth and inform volunteer recruitment. They will seek partnerships with community-based organizations to build on this work. They will develop a map of accessible Adopt-A-Beach sites and will expand accessibility of their Adopt-A-Beach safety video by producing versions in multiple languages.

Program History. Heal the Bay received three competitive Adopt-A-Beach grants in FY1998/99 through FY2000/01. Since FY2002/03, the Commission has supported Heal the Bay's extensive Adopt-A-Beach Program through the targeted grants program. Heal the Bay's Adopt-A-Beach Program reaches 30,000 people a year and fits the goal of the targeted grants by carrying out activities associated with Commission programs.

Proposal. Staff proposes providing a \$50,000 grant for Heal the Bay to continue and improve its extensive Adopt-A-Beach Program as described above.

4. \$30,000 FOR I LOVE A CLEAN SAN DIEGO'S ADOPT-A-BEACH PROGRAM

As the coordinator for San Diego County's Adopt-A-Beach Program, I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD) offers a number of enhanced features such as acknowledging adopting volunteers by placing placards with their group names at 83 adopted locations; delivering interpretive presentations to cleanup volunteers; coordinating cleanups at inland canyons with waterways that drain to the coast; conducting outreach to the Spanish-speaking community; and hosting interactive litter-tracking and volunteer databases. They encourage zero-waste cleanups by offering kits with reusable supplies.

New activities during this grant period will include updating a comprehensive COVID-19 integration plan to ensure safety and accessibility for staff and volunteers, transferring previous program scheduling and data into a new database system, and updating educational presentations for a virtual platform as well as a volunteer-led option.

Program History. In FY2002/03, ILACSD received a competitive WHALE TAIL® Grant to enhance its Adopt-A-Beach program and the Coastal Commission has supported them with targeted grants in the years since. ILACSD's Adopt-A-Beach Program manages over 100 coastal and inland cleanup locations throughout San Diego County and fits the goal of the targeted grants by carrying out activities associated with Commission programs.

Proposal. Staff proposes providing a \$30,000 grant for I Love A Clean San Diego to continue its extensive Adopt-A-Beach Program as described above.

5. \$169,000 FOR THE TIDES CENTER/MARINE EDUCATION PROJECT

The Marine Education Project (MEP) is a project of the nonprofit Tides Center in partnership with the Commission's Public Education Program. The mission of MEP is to preserve and restore the biodiversity and health of California's coastal and marine ecosystems through scientifically supported community involvement, education, and action. The MEP programs that would receive WHALE TAIL® funding are Project Grow and the statewide Education and Outreach Project.

Program History. Coastal Commission funding has supported in varying amounts Project Grow since 2000/01 and statewide education and outreach, including school-based marine education, since 2003/04.

Proposal. \$79,000 from this grant will support Project Grow, which promotes coastal stewardship by mobilizing community volunteers to restore habitat at Upper Newport Bay and beyond. Program volunteers remove non-native plants, collect seeds and propagate seedlings in an onsite native plant nursery, plant native plants, and monitor and maintain restored areas. Approximately 1,200 volunteers participate in the program per year (when safety restrictions due to COVID-19 allow). This year Project Grow will host an Environmental Leadership Program for college interns from diverse backgrounds. The Program will develop student skills in ecological restoration, leading and organizing public events, volunteer safety and management, and environmental education. Additional training will address risks to Upper Newport Bay and environmental justice. Interns will help lead groups of volunteers in restoration activities. The program will adhere to public health guidelines in deploying volunteers, which will include members of the public and high school groups from Title 1 schools. The funds would support a portion of the Program Manager's position, some of which is also currently funded by the Metropolitan Water District and other grants.

\$90,000 would fund Marine Education Project staffing in support of statewide public education activities, including development of new curricular materials, California Coastal Cleanup Day coordination, and programming to support environmental justice.

IV. APPROVAL OF \$30,000 TEMPORARY RESERVE

In order to keep some funding available for unforeseen needs and other potential targeted grant projects, staff recommends that the Commission set aside a temporary reserve to be allocated at a later date.

Program History. Commissioners have approved setting aside temporary reserves since FY2001/02. During some years reserve funds have been used for a targeted grant project, during other years they have been divided between funding a targeted grant and adding the balance to the competitive WHALE TAIL® Grants budget, and during the remaining years the entire balance ended up not being needed for anything specific and was added to the amount available for competitive grants later in the fiscal year.

Proposal. Staff recommends maintaining funds in a temporary reserve to keep some grant funding available for potential opportunities and needs that may arise. If not needed this fiscal year, the temporary reserve funds will revert and be available for future grants.

V. APPROVAL OF ABILITY TO REALLOCATE UNNEEDED FUNDS

1. In the event that one of the above targeted grantees does not need all the funds currently being allocated, Commissioners direct the staff to reallocate the remaining money to the following competitive grants budget or add it to the \$30,000 reserve described above.
2. In the event that one or more of the above targeted grantees needs more funds than are currently being allocated to successfully complete a project, and not all of the funds in the temporary reserve are needed for another purpose, Commissioners direct the Executive Director to increase the targeted grant awards using funds from the \$30,000 reserve.

The motion can be found on page 2 of this staff report.