



**Consideration of Award of Climate, Access, and Restoration (CAR) Grant Funds for Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Planning Project
Staff Recommendation**

This agenda item presents for Board consideration a recommendation to award Climate, Access, and Restoration (CAR) Grant funding for the Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Planning Project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Applicant | East Bay Regional Park District |
| Project ID | CAR03 |
| Project Type | Planning |
| County | Contra Costa |
| Funding Request | \$390,000 |
| Total Project Cost | \$570,000 |
| Funding Recommendation | \$390,000 |

RECOMMENDATION

Conservancy staff recommends that the Board approve up to \$390,000 in grant funding for the Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Planning Project proposed by the East Bay Regional Park District. Conservancy staff prepared the text below based on staff’s best understanding of the information provided in the applicant’s Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 applications. Conservancy staff and the Professional Review Panel consisting of the following agencies: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Protection Commission, California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Department of Water resources and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have reviewed the proposal. Conservancy staff contacted local governments and districts, water agencies, and tribes via the local notification process to receive comments and ensure project support. Prior to entering into a grant agreement, staff will work with the applicant to further refine the project’s scope of work.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Planning Project will develop a sea level rise adaptation plan and a vegetation management plan to support the long term sustainability of 1,648 acres of open water, wetlands, and upland habitat. The Big Break Regional Shoreline (Big Break) provides habitat for 70 bird species and several mammals of which six special-status species are known to occur within the parkland. Additionally Big Break provides essential and diverse public access to the Delta with outdoor exhibits, trails, a fishing pier, a kayak launch site, and a designated trailhead for the San Francisco Bay Water Trail. Additionally Big Break features a one-of-a-kind visitors center that connects the Park to the Delta through educational and recreational programs.

The Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Planning Project will lay the foundation for a multi-benefit habitat restoration, enhancement, and public access components. Specific activities proposed in this planning grant include, but are not limited to, the following: flood risk assessment, topographic survey, vegetation and wetland mapping, cultural resource risk assessments, permit evaluation and timing strategies, construction phases timeline, and marsh circulation and hydrology assessment. When complete, the project team will have specific and actionable plans that lead directly to implementation of projects that would maintain ecological function and public access while withstanding climate change, sea level rise, and changing conditions.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

This planning effort is not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

COST SHARE

The cost share amount is 32 percent of the project budget. The applicant will provide \$180,00 as in-kind services through staff time to perform grant management, administration, and reporting; review existing conditions; develop conceptual designs; and conduct public outreach.

ALIGNMENT WITH STATE AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

The project is consistent with and links to multiple actions and priorities identified in the Conservancy's governing statute, the Conservancy's strategic plan, the Delta Plan, and in other state and regional plans. The plan will provide multiple benefits, including flood protection during persistent rainfall and flooding events, water quality improvements, improved habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species, and additional opportunities for naturalist programming.

LOCAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The proposal demonstrates local support and includes a resolution of support from the project's county's Board of Supervisors. The proposed project is deeply rooted in Big Break's Land Use Plan, which the applicant developed in collaboration with the community when Big Break was originally acquired. At the time, planners saw the potential for the site and wanted to create a park that maximized the natural resources while balancing the area's need for public access all while honoring the concerns and requests of the community. Additionally, the community has played an essential role in shaping Big Break's interpretive and recreation programming.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The applicant submitted the proposed project under the Conservancy's Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 grant programs. After evaluating the proposal through both grant programs, Conservancy staff determined that components of the project were ineligible under the Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 grant programs. Conservancy staff and the Professional Review Panel (Proposition 1 requirement) reviewed the proposal and it received consistently high evaluations across all reviewers. Conservancy staff determined that all elements of the proposed project are ideally suited for Climate, Access, and Restoration funding. By funding through CAR, the result is a single cost-effective, comprehensive, and multi-benefit project that will benefit the Delta ecosystem and community.

BACKGROUND

Chaptered on September 23, 2021, the Budget Act of 2021 (Senate Bill 170, Item 3875-101-0001 of Section 2.00) provided the Delta Conservancy with \$5,250,000 for projects that support climate resilience, community access, and natural resource protection activities (collectively known as Climate, Access, and Restoration (CAR) Funding). Of the total, \$4,987,500 is available for projects.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE

Move to award funding up to \$390,000 to the East Bay Regional Parks District from the Climate, Access, and Restoration (CAR) Grant Program for the Big Break Regional Shoreline Restoration and Public Access Planning Project.

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FIGURE 10.1 MAP OF THE BIG BREAK REGIONAL SHORELINE RESTORATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

