Public Input on Full Proposals Submitted to the Cosco Busan Oil Spill Settlement – Recreational Use Grant Program

Date: 25 January 2013

Consistent with the Final Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan for the Cosco Busan Oil Spill prepared by the Cosco Busan Trustee Council1, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) are overseeing a competitive grant program being implemented by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). In response to a request for pre-proposals, numerous project proposals were submitted by a variety of local cities, counties, districts and other public and non-profit entities. These proposals requested a total of $34.5 million. However, CDFW and CSLC (the state Trustees) have an estimated total of $6.8 million to allocate. After selecting a list of proposals that best matched the grant program funding priorities, the state Trustees solicited public input on the projects selected. The selected projects include a variety of deserving projects designed to improve recreational opportunities in areas impacted by the Cosco Busan spill.

The state Trustees received a total of thirteen public comments expressing general support for various individual project(s) (see comments below). No negative comments or specific concerns regarding any of the project proposals were received. After considering all public input received, the state Trustees made their final project selections based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan for the Cosco Busan Oil Spill, and the amount of funding available. The state Trustees coordinated the selection of projects with the federal Trustees on the Cosco Busan Trustee Council and the Trustee Council has determined that the projects selected by CDFW and CSLC, including project locations, are appropriate restoration under the Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan for the Cosco Busan Oil Spill.

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1 The Cosco Busan Trustee Council is comprised of representatives of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly the California Department of Fish and Game), the California State Lands Commission, the Department of the Interior through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
EMAIL COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Email #1:

I am writing in support of the Sonoma Land Trust (SLT) grant application for $240,000 to construct a 2.5 mile segment of the Bay Trail spine between the Petaluma River and Tolay Creek. I am commenting as the president of the Friends of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). We whole heartedly support SLT’s application. The NWR partners with SLT on many levels to accomplish habitat and public access projects in the San Pablo Bay region of San Francisco Bay. Together with the Department of Fish and Game we have successfully accumulated thousands of acres of wild land, open space and habitat for wildlife. The missing critical component is public access: for education, enjoyment and for building stewardship. The North Bay is within an hour's drive of 9 million San Francisco bay area residents. It is these people, old and young alike who are responsible for prioritizing our nation's wildlands. They must be given opportunities to experience these lands. The north bay is particularly in need of access, please consider funding this important and needed project.

Thank you for the work you do,
Francesca Demgen
President
Friends of San Pablo Bay NWR

Email #2:

Michelle,

We were pleased to receive word that the Sonoma Land Trust’s request for a $240,000 grant to construct the San Francisco Bay Trail at Sears Point in Sonoma has been selected to move forward for final consideration. With the Cosco Busan Oil Spill Settlement Recreational Use Grant Program’s focus on public use of the San Francisco Bay, it is fitting that $240,000, or .015% of the funding be devoted to the construction of these 2.5 miles of new shoreline access that will one day be part of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. In this particular case, the construction of these 2.5 miles will connect directly to existing Bay Trail at neighboring Sonoma Baylands and will result in a total of 5 continuous miles of shoreline trail in the North Bay. It is important to note that while there are many miles of existing public access on Sonoma’s ocean coastline, currently Sonoma Baylands and the neighboring Tubbs Island Loop trail are the only Bay shoreline access points in Sonoma County. The Sonoma Baylands trail offers an important and unique view of a successful habitat restoration project funded by public investment. The Sears Point Bay Trail will provide more of this essential access showcasing the importance of wetland restoration around the Bay.

Thank you for your consideration of this project.
Laura
Laura Thompson
Bay Trail Project Manager
Association of Bay Area Governments

Email #3:

I am writing in support of the proposal by the California Academy of Sciences's REEF program at Pillar Point along the San Mateo County coast.

I am a volunteer naturalist with the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve just north of Pillar Point. Our volunteers perform the same functions as proposed in the REEF program proposal. I feel that educating students and the public about the unique and fragile intertidal environment is critical to the survival of this special area.

The Pillar Point tidepools are easily accessible to over 7 million residents of the greater Bay Area and is often featured in newspaper articles as a premier location to go tidepooling. That, coupled with it's location at the high-profile Maverick's surf event each year, make Pillar Point one of the most overused and overcrowded recreational locations on the coast.

The REEF program could provide a critical presence of well educated and enthusiastic volunteers to engage the public during low-tide periods when we can see over 600 visitors, often bringing their dogs, on a sunny day. Crowd management is non-existent and one can witness inappropriate and destructive behavior, however inadvertent, on any one of these days.

A naturalist program like REEF could engage all the school groups and visitors that come to the Pillar Point tidepools, educating them about the intertidal environment and how they can take action to become good stewards of this special and wonderful place and help preserve it for future visitors to enjoy.

Marsha Cohen

Email #4:

Dear Michelle,

I would like to submit a letter in support of the California Academy of Sciences’ grant proposal to develop a volunteer naturalist program at Pillar Point, entitled the Pillar Point REEF Program. I am a retired marine biology professor from San Francisco State University and a resident of Half Moon Bay. I began taking students to Pillar Point in the mid 1970s and am very familiar with the intertidal habitats found there. The rocky intertidal shelf at the Point itself is a continuation of the extensive reef that also encompasses the James V. Fitzgerald Marine Reserve to the north. The sand and mud flats are excellent examples of these habitats and support a rich and varied soft sediment community.
Over the 30+ years of leading field trips to these habitats I have observed the tremendous recreational value they provide to California residents. Fishing, clamming, beachcombing and especially tide-pooling opportunities are all easily available and frequently used. However, I have also observed that these invaluable assets are also often abused by lack of public understanding of the fragile nature of the natural resources and limited oversight ability on the part of the authorities charged with their protection.

I believe that a naturalist program will enhance visitor experience and will allow the public to enjoy the reef while also helping to ensure its recreational experience for future visitors. I further believe that the California Academy of Sciences is uniquely qualified to mount such a naturalist program. The Academy has a long tradition of training an outstanding corps of volunteers for many projects both at the Academy and in the field. Calling on the expertise of the Academy scientific staff and that of its Fellows, volunteer naturalists would receive expert training in the biology, geology and the ecology of Pillar Point. This training would be coupled with the long-standing docent-training program of the Friends of the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve (FFMR), which specializes in teaching interpretation and conservation of the near shore marine habitat.

As an Academy Fellow and a 30-year board member of the FFMR, I have participated in the training programs of both institutions as a lecturer and field biologist. I can attest to the high quality of the personnel of both programs. I have known the principal investigator of this grant proposal, Dr. Rebecca Rodgers, for over 15 years and know her to be an outstanding teacher and field biologist.

In summary I believe the funding of the REEF proposal would profoundly enhance the recreational experience of the public at Pillar Point through contact with a knowledgeable interpretive corps and at the same time add a much needed layer of protection to this environmental jewel. I wholeheartedly support the proposal and strongly urge it be funded.

Sincerely,
Thomas M. Niesen
Professor Emeritus of Marine Biology
San Francisco State University

Email #5:

Dear Ms. Olson:

I am writing in support of the California Academy of Science's grant application for the subject Program.

I am the current President of the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve (FFMR). The Fitzgerald Marine Reserve (FMR) lies just to the north of Pillar Point. FFMR volunteer naturalists have been conducting tours of the tidepools at FMR for over 40 years. We have approximately 75 volunteer naturalists who have been trained in marine biology and tidepool etiquette as well as
the geology and natural history of the area. We have an established volunteer naturalist training
course, training materials and volunteer scheduling infrastructure.

FFMR volunteers have collaborated with the California Academy of Sciences for several years
in conducting surveys of marine life at FMR and Pillar Point. Many of our volunteers regularly
visit the Pillar Point tidepools.

In order for groups of 10 or more to visit FMR, they must make a reservation with the San Mateo
County Department of Parks and pay a $35 fee. Groups that cannot get a reservation or don’t
want to pay the fee often go to Pillar Point instead. This results in large numbers of
unsupervised visitors at Pillar Point on low tide days and, unfortunately, widespread abuse of
the marine environment. There is, and has been for many years, a dire need for an organized
effort to protect and preserve the Pillar Point reef by educating and encouraging visitors to
respect the marine environment.

The subject program will provide that effort. FFMRF is excited to help in this effort and we will
do everything we can to make it a success. We cannot think of a more worthy project to support.

Sincerely,

Tom Ciotti
President, FFMRF

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Email #6:

Michelle,

During the past year I have coordinated a group called the Oakland Estuary Coalition,
consisting of harbor masters, local and regional law enforcement, a variety of government
agencies and concerned citizens groups.

This coalition strongly supports the grant proposal submitted by Todd Thalhammer of
CalRecycle for a program to enhance the Oakland Estuary.

All were aware of ongoing issues addressed by his project, but none had the appropriate
resources to deal with them effectively.

Since Todd was only requesting matching funds, this would seem to be a true “no-brainer”.

Given the proximity of the estuary to the site of the Costo Busan oil spill, couple with the
coming America’s Cup to SF Bay, I would hope that this grant could be awarded in a timely
manner.

I know that numerous letters of support were submitted from a wide variety of agencies.
Would it be possible for you to provide a status on this grant application.

Thank you,

Brock
Brock de Lappe
Harbor Master / Property Manager
Alameda Marina

Email #7:

Dear Ms Olson,

A recent article in the Business Journal featured an interview with Jeff Birdwell, President of the Commercial Division of Sares Regis Development Group, highlighted the underused waterways of Redwood City and the tremendous opportunities that lay waiting for opening up access to the Bay. Mr. Birdwell was quoted, “…the community thought of the water’s edge as an industrial edge. That’s where most of the garbage dumps were. I don’t think it was thought of as a beautiful place, which to me is a huge tragedy. We’re looking right now at the back of a loading dock of a big-box shopping center”. You can read the entire article here [http://www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/print-edition/2012/12/21/where-land-meets-sea-jeff-birdwells.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/print-edition/2012/12/21/where-land-meets-sea-jeff-birdwells.html)

Redwood City is going through an incredible transformation in its downtown, and another transformation is being envisioned for opening up the Bay to residents and visitors so they may experience the treasures right in their backyard.

In partnership with the Bair Island Aquatic Center, the City of Redwood City is a finalist in the COSCO Busan Grant. There is a special synergy with an adjacent boathouse serving 500 youth and adults using dragon boats, outrigger canoes, standup paddle boards, surf skis, and rowing shells. The possibility of creating a recreational center, at the intersection of the SF Bay Trail and the Water Trail, is an incredible opportunity that could serve tens of thousands of people a year in the future.

Currently, the City owns nine acres of undeveloped land in the area described in our grant proposal. While the Port of Redwood City has the only public boat launching facility with access to the San Francisco Bay south of Coyote Point, it is designed for launching boats on trailers and has a high profile dock making it difficult for kayakers and unusable for rowers. Our proposal for a new public dock to be located on this undeveloped site is a protected location away from the Port and other marinas, allowing beginners and families to avoid traffic with most motor and sail boats.

We have a tremendous opportunity to provide a recreational access point to the Bay by having a new dock. Because of our strong partnership, the Bair Island Aquatic Center and the City of Redwood City could host new beginning rowing and kayak programs for middle school and high
school students; could develop new family programs; and could offer environmental education and Bay conservation programs.

Thank you for your consideration of accepting our grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Chris
Christopher Beth
Director
Redwood City
Parks, Recreation and Community Services
LETTERS PROVIDING PUBLIC INPUT
December 7, 2012

Michelle Olson
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005.

Dear Ms. Olson:

I am writing to support a grant application from the County of San Mateo in the amount of $400,000 as part of a multi-grant project at Coyote Point County Park in San Mateo California. The money will be used to rebuild and re-engineer about 1,000 feet of the promenade at Coyote Point.

Coyote Point is one of the most heavily used parks in San Mateo County. It is a major location for windsurfing. The money will be used to create new entrances and exits to the beach and to ensure that the promenade itself withstands the wave action in that area. The existing structure is basically crumbling into the bay and dates from the 1920’s. Newer construction techniques combined with a new design capable of conforming to the natural action of the waves will create a premiere windsurfing location on San Francisco Bay.

Thank you for your consideration of this grant request. San Mateo County has an outstanding reputation as a fiscal and project manager. I know that, should you decide to join with other grantors, your funding will create a public improvement that will attract hundreds of thousands of visitors in future years.

All the best,

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

KJS/bp
December 14, 2012

Michelle Olson  
Manager, Impact-Directed Environmental Accounts  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
1133 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 1100,  
Washington, DC 20005  

Re: Improvements to the promenade trail at the Coyote Point Recreation Area  

Dear Ms. Olson,  

I write in enthusiastic support of the San Mateo County Department of Parks’ application for a $400,000 grant, which will fund improvements along the western shoreline of the promenade trail at the Coyote Point Recreation Area.  

The Coyote Point Recreation Area is enjoyed by many thousands of people every year. Visitors from all over the County have long appreciated public access to the Bay shoreline in this park. The sandy beach draws families with small children wanting to swim. Windsurfers and kayakers often use this site because of good parking, restrooms and a staging area to support their recreational activity. In addition, the accessible promenade trail provides an ideal place to view people enjoying the San Francisco Bay. Unfortunately, wind, weather and poor design have caused the premature deterioration of the promenade trail.  

The County has worked cooperatively with the recreational users to create a full set of plans and permits. The County has already secured a $942,360 from a Department of Boating and Waterways grant and private donations. This $400,000 grant will provide full funding for the project, allowing construction to commence in 2013.  

I strongly support grant funding for this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.  

Sincerely,  

Jerry Hill  
Senate District 13
December 14, 2012

Ms. Michelle Olson  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)  
1133 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005.

Subject: Support for Cosco Busan Recreational Use Grant Funding for Coyote Point Recreation Area Promenade - Western Shoreline Project

Dear Ms. Olson:

The San Francisco Boardsailing Association (SFBA) is writing in enthusiastic support of the San Mateo County Parks application for Cosco Busan Recreational Use Grant funding to rebuild the Coyote Point Recreation Area Promenade on the Park’s western shoreline.

The San Francisco Boardsailing Association (SFBA) is a California not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1986 to protect and enhance boardsailing access, and to promote boardsailing safety and related education in the San Francisco Bay Area. To this end, SFBA actively participates in the planning processes for special events, development, reuse and redevelopment of public and private properties adjacent to San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean which may enhance, threaten and/or directly or indirectly impact the recreational uses of Windsurfing and/or Kiteboarding.

As a representative of avid windsurfers and kiters on San Francisco Bay, SFBA is excited about the Coyote Point Recreation Area Promenade - Western Shoreline Project. Our Board of Directors and members have worked tirelessly with San Mateo County Parks and professional consulting coastal engineers for years on both interim and more permanent measures to design and rebuild the highly degraded Coyote Point Park western shoreline and promenade. Many of us have been windsurfing at this location since the mid-1970’s, and can attest to its significant and vital importance to the recreational use of windsurfing and kiteboarding on San Francisco Bay.

The World-Class recreational uses of windsurfing and kiteboarding at Coyote Point are irreplaceable because of the regional geography and superior wind conditions unique to the San Francisco Bay Area. More specifically, the local geography of the Coyote Point Recreation Area is unique in two ways:

1. It is the only public water-contact access location on the entire San Francisco Bay Peninsula that is suitable for windsurfing and kiteboarding instruction, and at the same time…
2. It is open to the greater Bay waters for more advanced windsurfers and kiteboarders (also frequently referred to as sailors).
For perspective, San Francisco Bay is the largest Pacific estuary in the Americas with an area of approximately 1,600 square miles, or 1,024,000 acres. Yet only a relatively small part of that area is suitable for windsurfing, and an even tinier part of that area (several acres?) is suitable for windsurfing instruction.

Throughout the Bay there are only a handful of beaches, and this beach is particularly valuable because:

1. The prevailing Northwest and West-Northwest winds blow students safely toward the shore instead of out-to-sea, and
2. It is relatively stable, while much of the shoreline in the West Bay, and essentially all of the other windsurfing and kiteboarding launches such as the nearby 3rd Avenue launch in Foster City, are eroding.

Over the last thirty or so years, San Mateo County Parks has unconditionally supported the recreational uses of windsurfing and now kiteboarding with the construction, maintenance and enhancement of the large adjacent parking lot, the initial improvements to the then unimproved and object-strewn shoreline, temporary sand-bag access ramps, the dedicated sail and kite rigging areas, the restrooms and the one-of-a-kind changing hut. They also lease facilities to one of the very few boardsailing retail and instruction venues in the Bay Area.

In summary, SFBA strongly supports and encourages the use of Cosco Busan Recreational Use Grant Funding for implementation of the well-designed Coyote Point Recreation Area Promenade Western Shoreline Project. It supports shoreline recreational use by rebuilding and re-armoring the levee, restoring the promenade pathway for all users and it creates three new and permanent access ramps into the Bay for windsurfing, kiteboarding and other non-motorized water-contact recreation activities.

SFBA members look forward to the day when we can again, without hesitation, drive to Coyote Point Park to sail without wondering if the promenade pathway will have “area closed” signs or if the sand-bag access ramps will be too damaged to safely enter the water while carrying our gear.

If I or other SFBA members can answer any questions or respond to any comments, please don’t hesitate to contact me at the following: billrobberson@sfba.org, president@sfba.org, or via phone at (415) 307-7720.

Sincerely,

William Robberson, Board President
San Francisco Boardsailing Association
Michelle Olson
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Olson,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for the Surfer’s Beach Access and Safety Project. The need to improve conditions along this 400-foot stretch of highway and coastal trail on the San Mateo County coastside is growing every day. This has been made evident through the 2007 Midcoast Parks Action Plan and a 2011 Improving Safety and Mobility Report released by San Mateo County.

Through this funding, the County will be able to initiate the planning and permitting process to rebuild and enhance a 400-foot segment of the California Coastal Trail. Once rebuilt, this segment will provide the safest link between two communities and serve one of the most popular locations on the coastside. In addition to improving safety along this trail, the County would also build a 100-foot long retaining structure that will stabilize the embankment that supports the roadway of Highway 1. This will support the integrity of the roadway and ensure safety to residents and visitors while driving along this scenic corridor. Finally, by request of the California Coastal Commission, we will initiate planning and permitting for a removable staircase to provide vertical access to Surfer’s Beach. Currently, most beachgoers use a deteriorating section of the road embankment for Highway 1 to access Surfer’s Beach. This further deteriorates the failing embankment.

The benefits that would come from improving the California Coastal Trail, coastal access, and eroding embankment will allow residents and visitors to enjoy this beach and scenic corridor for generations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Horsley
Supervisor, 3rd District
San Mateo County
December 18, 2012

Michelle Olson
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Olson,

I am writing to request your support to award funding to San Mateo County for their project at Surfer’s Beach in Half Moon Bay. Surfer’s Beach is a beautiful and treasured part of San Mateo County’s Coastline. The beach attracts many shoreline recreational users including beachgoers, surfers, kayakers, and standup paddlers.

Surfer’s Beach is a wide sandy beach located behind a seawall adjacent to the very busy Highway 1. The shoulder of Highway 1 is currently used as the California Coastal Trail near Surfer’s Beach. This portion of the trail is unpaved and has severely eroded at Surfer’s Beach. The narrowness of the shoulder along Highway 1 often forces non-motorized users to go onto the shoulder to pass each other. Current beach access is down a steep deteriorated grade from this eroded section of Highway 1. Beach users such as cyclists and hikers need a new improved multiple-use pathway that allows them to travel safely off the roadway.

The Surfer’s Beach Access and Erosion Control Project begins just north of a Mirada Surf County Park capital improvement project that is now underway. That project is a section of 10’-wide California Coastal Trail being built parallel to Highway 1, north from the Park to 40’ past Coronado Street. This project will extend the California Coastal Trail for yet another 360’ as a multiple-use trail and enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and access to Surfer’s Beach.

The project fills a critical San Mateo County gap in the California Coastal Trail by completing this section of trail for cyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters, stroller pushers and other users. The safety and access improvements that this project would bring to Surfer’s Beach and the California Coastal Trail are much needed improvements to our regions recreation system.

I ask for your consideration to support this timely effort.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Gordon
Assemblyman, Twenty-Fourth District
December 21, 2012

Michelle Olson
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1133 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005

Subject: Cosco Busan Oil Spill Settlement Recreational Use Grant Program
Project Support

Dear Ms. Olson:

The San Francisco Bay Trail Project is submitting support for several projects currently under consideration for funding through the Cosco Busan Oil Spill Settlement Recreational Use Grant Program.

The Bay Trail is a regional plan for a shared-use bicycle and pedestrian path that will one day allow continuous travel around San Francisco Bay. Currently, 330 miles of trail have been completed. Eventually, the Bay Trail will extend over 500 miles to link the shoreline of nine counties, passing through 47 cities and crossing seven toll bridges.

The Bay Trail provides the public with a direct connection to the edge of San Francisco Bay. The trail attracts a wide variety of users, including: walkers, bicyclists, joggers, wheelchair riders, dog walkers, bicycle commuters, schoolchildren, etc. Over 50 miles of shoreline trail exist within the affected shoreline area and significant portions of the trail were closed to the public for an extended period of time as a result of the oil spill and clean-up efforts.

The oil spill had a direct and significant impact on the ability of the public to access and enjoy shoreline trails and the Bay. This was particularly the case in the East Bay. As a result, we request that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation approve the grant requests for the following projects in order to mitigate the impacts of the Cosco Busan Oil Spill on the Bay Trail and shoreline access.
Each of the following projects would result in substantial improvements to the Bay Trail and shoreline access to the impacted areas of the Bay:

1) Albany Bulb Trail Restoration, City of Albany ($250,000)
2) Berkeley Municipal Fishing Pier: Accessibility Surface Project, City of Berkeley ($230,138)
3) Powell Street Recreation Improvements at Eastshore State Park, City of Emeryville ($600,000)
4) Albany Beach Recreation Improvement Project, East Bay Regional Park District, ($800,000)
5) Martin Luther King, Jr. Boat Launch Renovation, East Bay Regional Park District, ($500,000)
6) Coyote Point Promenade Western Shoreline, San Mateo County Department of Parks, ($400,000)
7) Sears Point Restoration Project: Proposed Bay Trail, Sonoma Land Trust ($240,000)

Thank you for considering these projects and please contact me at 510-464-7935 or laurat@abag.ca.gov if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Laura Thompson
Bay Trail Project Manager