



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Public Works



Date: July 16, 2013
Board Meeting Date: September 10, 2013
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: James Nantell, Interim Director of Parks
Via James C. Porter, Director of Public Works

Subject: California Coastal Conservancy Grant Acceptance for the Devil's Slide Trail Ambassadors Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a California Coastal Conservancy grant for the Devil's Slide Ambassadors Program, in the amount of \$15,000.

BACKGROUND:

Highway 1 hugs the coastline for much of the distance between Pacifica and Montara. In one part, the road crosses the aptly named Devil's Slide region, a steep, unstable geological formation. This section of road has a long history of closure due to rockslides and land slippage.

Following many years of public input and careful evaluation of alternatives, Devil's Slide was bypassed by the creation of the Devil's Slide Tunnels Project. This \$342 million Caltrans construction project resulted in two 30-foot wide and 4,200-foot long tunnels beneath San Pedro Mountain. The Devil's Slide Tunnels opened to automobile traffic during March 2013.

Caltrans will convey to the County the bypassed segment of Highway 1 and all State-owned properties located west of the former travel way, and the easement east of the travel way, when approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). Your Board approved the terms of the land transfer on July 9, 2013 by Resolution 072643. This transfer is expected to be approved at CTC's meeting on August 6, 2013.

County Parks will convert the relinquished 1.2 mile section of Highway 1 being bypassed by the Devil's Slide Tunnels into a multiple use Devil's Slide Trail that will also be part of the California Coastal Trail. The Devil's Slide Trail will serve numerous visitors including cyclists, pedestrians and individuals wanting to view the scenic Pacific

Ocean views, local vegetation and wildlife. Your Board approved \$1,991,525 as part of the FY 12/13 budget for conversion of the highway into a public trail.

Plans are now underway to prepare the Trail to be open to the public by March 2014. These plans include completion of parking areas on either end of the Trail, two overlooks along the trail, safety features, and interpretive and park information signage.

DISCUSSION:

Two County Park Rangers will be assigned to the new Devil's Slide Trail. Also, the County is planning to incorporate volunteers in a new interpretive and safety program. A Devil's Slide Trail Ambassadors Program will be modeled upon the successful Volunteer Trail Patrol Program underway at other County Parks.

The Devil's Slide Trail Ambassadors will help the Park Rangers by observing and reporting about trail use and conditions. These trained Ambassadors will also educate and assist visitors by answering questions, distributing maps, and advising visitors of park regulations and trail etiquette. Park visitors and County Parks will benefit from their visibility and general assistance.

Trail Ambassadors will receive comprehensive training including a County Parks overview, Devil's Slide-specific training, and basic first aid/CPR. Site-specific training will cover natural history, local culture and history, basic trail maintenance, and creative problem solving. Effective communication skills training will be emphasized so Ambassadors can communicate well with visitors. Additional training partners and resources will be provided by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. These partners as well as the City of Pacifica and California State Parks will also help with volunteer recruitment. The Devil's Slide Coast website (www.devilsslidecoast.org) will also be used for program promotion.

Park staff will develop a training manual and training workshop with one-on-one mentoring for the volunteers. Grant funds will underwrite supplies and materials such as vests, radios, day packs, and first aid kits. A new Devil's Slide Trail map and brochure will also be produced.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Resolution as to form.

Approval of this Resolution contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of an Environmentally Conscious Community as execution of the Grant Agreement furthers the number and quality of natural experiences and recreational opportunities for County Park visitors. Each visitor gains a greater appreciation of the natural environment and the need for its preservation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The acceptance of this grant has no impact on the County General Fund.