

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
DIVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
PRELIMINARY FUNDING COMMITMENT  
CLEAN BEACHES INITIATIVE (CBI) GRANT PROGRAM  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION SUBMITTAL TOOL (FAAST) PIN 24745

**RECIPIENT:** City of Santa Cruz

**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** \$600,000

**PROJECT TITLE:** Reduce Sources of Bacteria  
at Cowell Beach (Project)

**TOTAL CBI GRANT REQUEST:** \$450,000

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Rachid Ait-Lasri,  
Water Resource Control Engineer,  
916-341-5825

## **AUTHORITY**

The Clean Beaches Initiative (CBI) Grant Program provides funding for projects that restore and protect the water quality and the environment of coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near shore waters. The CBI Grant Program was initiated in response to the poor water quality and significant exceedances of bacterial indicators revealed by Assembly Bill (AB) 411 monitoring at California's beaches. Funding for the program is available from Chapter 7 of the *Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act* (Proposition 84). In addition, there are unused or re-appropriated funds remaining from the *California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002* (Proposition 40) and the *Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002* (Proposition 50).

The State Water Board adopted Resolution No. 2012-0020 on June 5, 2012, which revised the CBI Guidelines used to solicit applications, evaluate proposals, and award grants for Proposition 84 (Chapter 7) funds, and any unused or re-appropriated Proposition 40 and 50 CBI funds. The Resolution authorized the Deputy Director of the Division of Financial Assistance (Division) to approve proposed projects, execute grant agreements and amendments to implement the proposed projects and utilize funds from projects which are withdrawn or completed under budget to fund additional projects recommended by the Clean Beaches Task Force (CBTF), or augment the scope and budget of projects previously awarded.

The Concept Proposal for this Project was submitted to FAAST on August 23, 2012. The CBTF met on October 22, 2012 and recommended this Project be invited to submit a detailed application. The applicant submitted a Detailed Application on February 5, 2014, and it has been determined to be complete. This Preliminary Funding Commitment shall be posted on the State Water Board's Internet website, and circulated to the CBTF for review and comment prior to the Deputy Director executing a grant agreement.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

Cowell Beach is one of the most accessible and popular family recreational beaches in the City of Santa Cruz (City). It is located adjacent to Main Beach, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, and the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf. Recreational activities include swimming, surfing, volleyball, and walking along the beach, as well as a junior lifeguard program during the summer.

The goal of the project is to reduce bacteria levels at Cowell Beach by improving the Neary Lagoon storm water drainage facilities and pipe lines which are a suspected source of bacteria. Cowell Beach is currently identified as one of the most polluted beaches in the State. Cowell Beach has been on Heal the Bay's "Beach Bummer" list for the last four years. There are a number of potential sources that are thought to contribute to the high bacterial concentrations and poor water quality at Cowell Beach during the summer months. The discharge from the storm drainage facilities has been shown to

contain raw sewage that is discharging to the beach through the sand. At this time, the City cannot access the drains for cleaning or inspection of the pipe(s) to determine source(s) of sewage. This project addresses the storm drainage facilities (pipelines and beach vault).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge is approximately 44 acres and supports a diversity of wetland and riparian wildlife, including many species of birds and fish and small but persistent populations of Western Pond Turtle and Wood Duck. Approximately 850 acres on the City's west side drain into Neary Lagoon via two major tributaries. The lagoon consists of two main channels that converge to a single channel at the concrete footbridge crossing. Neary Lagoon then flows over a concrete weir and passes out of the Refuge area through two 48" culverts running under the railroad tracks. The water then flows through these two culverts into a manmade channel which feeds into the flood control pump station. From the pump station, lagoon drainage flows underground via a 66 inch gravity line and a 66 inch force main pipeline (which carries flow when the flood control pump station is turned on) and exits at Cowell Beach at the 14 foot x 10 foot beach vault which currently has no access. Some urban runoff from adjacent neighborhoods also flows, via street catch basins, into the gravity line before it exits at Cowell Beach. During the dry season, up to one million gallons per day of flow from Neary Lagoon is diverted to the City Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) for treatment prior to discharge to the Pacific Ocean. Occasionally, flow is also diverted to the WWTF during periods of dry weather within the rainy season so that lagoon water levels may be dropped for flood protection and so the water may be treated at the WWTF, rather than being discharged untreated at the beach.

However, during the dry season, the water in the man-made channel that flows to the pump station and the water in the Neary Lagoon storm drain pipelines tend to stagnate under the dry weather conditions. Both pipelines exit at Cowell Beach approximately 5-12 feet below the sand, depending upon the tide and recent storm events. Although the force main pipe opening is covered with a Tideflex valve, neither pipeline outlet is capped. Thus, subsurface seepage from both pipelines is suspected to contribute to the high bacteria concentrations found at Cowell Beach during the summer months.

The proposed project consists of the following components to improve the Neary Lagoon storm drain infrastructure in order reduce bacteria concentrations at Cowell Beach:

1. Install stainless steel gates in each of two 48" storm drain culverts in order to block the Neary Lagoon discharges to the storm drains and allow regular cleaning and inspection of the Neary Lagoon storm water drainage facilities.
2. Replace the existing non-functioning hatch in the (14' x10') beach outlet vault with a new hatch to enable vault cleaning. The beach outlet vault cannot be cleaned in its current condition.
3. Clean and inspect the beach outlet vault and the two 66' inch Neary Lagoon storm drainage lines that run from Neary Lagoon pump station and exit below the sand at Cowell Beach.
4. Install a temporary plate on the opening of the 66" gravity pipeline at the beach outlet to isolate the beach sand and kelp from the gravity pipeline outlet at Cowell Beach.
5. Install a small storm water evacuation pump station near the railroad bridge to facilitate cleaning.

The total eligible cost of the Project is \$600,000. The applicant requested a CBI grant amount of \$450,000 for the Project.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

For this project, the Recipient filed a Notice of Determination (NOD) for CEQA compliance at the Santa Cruz County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors office on November 12, 2013. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for this project. Mitigation measures are as follows:

**Mitigation Measure #1:** Conduct western pond turtle relocation during temporary dewatering of Neary Lagoon outlet channel during the project construction period and during each summer. As proposed, any western pond turtle and native fish found in the isolated channel will be relocated to the Neary lagoon Wildlife Area by qualified biologists.

**Mitigation Measure #2:** Following installation of the new slide gates, the Neary Lagoon outlet channel will be surveyed for western pond turtles each time the slide gates are closed and the outlet channel and pump station inlet are isolated. Any western pond turtle and native fish found in the isolated channel or pump station intake will be relocated to the Neary Lagoon Wildlife Area.

### FISCAL IMPACT

As of July 1, 2013, the cumulative balance available for the CBI Grant Program, which is funded by Propositions 40, 50, and 84, is:

July 1, 2013	\$49,520,820
Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Approved Projects	\$8,733,433
Draft PFCs (proposed commitments):	\$307,000
This City of Santa Cruz Project:	\$450,000
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Funds Remaining for Future Commitments	\$40,030,387

### REGIONAL WATER BOARD IMPACT

The Central Coast Regional Water Board supports the Project.

### ROUTINE, NON-CONTROVERSIAL PROJECT

The proposed Project is routine and non-controversial based on Division staff's consideration of the documents and information provided by the Recipient, regulatory agencies, and written responses from the general public. There has been no indication of a protest or controversy regarding the proposed Project.

### PUBLIC REVIEW

The PFC was posted on the State Water Board's internet website for public review on **MMMM D, YYYY**.

### APPROVAL

Using the authority delegated by the State Water Resources Control Board on June 5, 2012, in Resolution No. 2012-0020, I hereby:

Approve a Clean Beaches Initiative Grant Program Preliminary Funding Commitment of \$450,000 for the Project.

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John Russell, Acting Deputy Director  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Financial Assistance

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Date

Reviewed by:  
Office of Chief Counsel  
Date:

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