

**WRP LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**Agenda Item 3.**

**February 27, 2003**

## COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Project Summary  
February 27, 2003

### WRP LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

File No. 97-001  
Project Manager: Trish Chapman

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorize the disbursement of up to \$450,000 to Environment Now to develop and manage a wetlands restoration local assistance program as a component of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project.

**LOCATION:** Southern California

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Resource Enhancement

<b>ESTIMATED COST:</b>	Coastal Conservancy	\$450,000
	Environment Now (in-kind)	<u>25,000</u>
	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$475,000</b>

To be funded by appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40)

**PROJECT SUMMARY:** The proposed authorization would provide a grant to Environment Now to develop and manage a wetlands restoration local assistance program as a component of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP). Environment Now will undertake this project as part of its coastal restoration program. Through the proposed program, Environment Now will provide technical assistance to local government agencies and community based organizations (CBOs) to facilitate implementation of projects to acquire, restore, and enhance coastal wetlands and coastal watersheds. The proposed project will help the WRP to increase the pace, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency of project implementation.

Environment Now will assist the WRP's local partners to set local and regional priorities; increase technical expertise on staff; secure funding; and develop and implement wetland preservation and restoration projects. In addition, Environment

Now will assist the Coastal Conservancy in managing the overall WRP effort.

Environment Now is a private nonprofit environmental organization whose mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the environment. One of its five core programs is to protect and restore coastal habitats. Facilitating the work of the WRP has become an integral part of Environment Now's coastal restoration program, and the proposed local assistance program will further these efforts.

# COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

February 27, 2003

## WRP LOCAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

File No. 97-001

Project Manager: Trish Chapman

### STAFF

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following Resolution pursuant to Sections 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of up to four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000) to Environment Now to develop and manage a wetlands restoration local assistance program as a component of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, subject to the condition that prior to the disbursement of any Conservancy funds, Environment Now shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a work program and budget, and the names and qualifications of any subcontractors that it intends to employ.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes and criteria set forth in Chapter 6 of the Public Resources Code (31251-31270) regarding enhancement of coastal resources.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the guidelines and criteria set forth in the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted on January 24, 2001.
3. Environment Now is a nonprofit organization existing under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

## STAFF DISCUSSION:

**Project Description:** The proposed authorization would provide a grant to Environment Now to assist the Conservancy in developing and managing a wetlands restoration local assistance program as a component of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP). Environment Now will undertake this project as part of its coastal restoration program. Through the proposed program, Environment Now will provide technical assistance to local government agencies and community based organizations (CBOs) to facilitate implementation of projects to acquire, restore, and enhance coastal wetlands and coastal watersheds. The proposed project will help the WRP to increase the pace, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency of project implementation.

Environment Now will assist the WRP's local partners to do the following:

- **Set local and regional priorities.** Environment Now will provide staff assistance to the five county task forces in their efforts to assess wetland conditions and needs, and set priorities.
- **Increase technical expertise on staff.** Environment Now will organize training sessions for local partners on technical issues such as permitting, environmental review, invasive species, restoration design, monitoring, etc.
- **Secure funding.** Environment Now will assist local partners in identifying appropriate sources of federal, state, and private funding for wetland and watershed projects.
- **Develop and implement wetland preservation and restoration projects.** Environment Now will provide technical assistance to local partners on all aspects of project development and implementation.

In addition, Environment Now will assist the Coastal Conservancy in managing the overall WRP effort, including tasks such as preparing program reports, organizing meetings, and assisting in the review and evaluation of project proposals.

The WRP began five years ago as an initiative of state and federal agencies to better coordinate their efforts on wetlands issues in southern California. Since then, participation in the WRP by local agencies and community based organizations has grown steadily, and become one of the greatest strengths of the WRP. The WRP has initiated several programs in response to the high level of local interest, including: creating wetlands task forces in each of the five coastal counties to increase coordination among local agencies and between state and local

partners; adding task force representatives to the WRP Managers Group to provide local participants with a greater voice in WRP policy-making; and initiating the small grants program to build local capacity and community involvement. The proposed local assistance program is an expansion of these efforts to empower local partners in their efforts to preserve and restore coastal wetlands and watersheds in southern California.

Environment Now is a private nonprofit environmental organization whose mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the environment. One of its five core goals is to protect and restore coastal habitats. Environment Now currently manages the WRP's public outreach program and small grants program; in addition, Environment Now has a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to prepare a regional wetlands and watershed management plan for the WRP. Facilitating the work of the WRP has become an integral part of Environment Now's coastal restoration program, and the proposed local assistance program will further these efforts.

**Project Financing:** The Conservancy's contribution to the proposed project would be funded by appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40), allocated internally for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project.

Coastal Conservancy	\$450,000
Environment Now (in-kind)	<u>25,000</u>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$475,000</b>

**Site Description:** The project area for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project is the coastal wetlands and watersheds from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the International Border with Mexico.

**Project History:** The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project is a partnership of federal, state, and local agencies, business leaders, and environmental organizations working together to implement a regional strategy for wetlands recovery in southern California. The Coastal Conservancy serves as staff to the program. The WRP has grown considerably over the past five years, primarily from the increased involvement of local agencies and CBOs. In addition to funding specific wetland and watershed acquisition and restoration projects, the Coastal Conservancy has also provided funding for the WRP's public participation program, Science Advisory Panel, and Small Grants Program.

**PROJECT SUPPORT:** The Wetlands Recovery Project is a partnership of 17 state and federal agencies working in concert with local governments, business leaders, and environmental organizations. Its efforts to develop and implement a regional strategy for wetlands recovery in southern California enjoy broad support from both the public and private sector.

**CONSISTENCY WITH  
CONSERVANCY'S  
ENABLING LEGISLATION:** The proposed authorization will assist the Conservancy in meeting its purposes and objectives under Section 31251-31270 of the Public Resources Code by facilitating the identification, prioritization, planning and implementation of wetland restoration and enhancement opportunities in southern California's coastal zone.

Consistent with Section 31254, the proposed authorization will request assistance from local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other members of the public on the development of priorities for coastal resource enhancement projects in southern California. Consistent with Section 31255, the proposed authorization will assist the WRP in soliciting proposals for resource enhancement projects from local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other members of the public.

**CONSISTENCY WITH  
CONSERVANCY'S  
PROJECT SELECTION  
CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:** The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

**Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's enabling legislation" section above.

**Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** The intended source of Conservancy funds will be monies appropriated to the Conservancy from Proposition 40, the "California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002." Allowable uses under this legislation include acquisition, restoration, and protection of land and water resources. The proposed project will further efforts of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project to acquire, restore, and enhance coastal wetland and coastal watersheds in southern California. Therefore, the project is consistent with the purposes of the funding source.

**Support of the Public:** See the "Project Support" section above.

**Location:** The project area for the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project is the coastal wetlands and watersheds from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the International Border with Mexico.

**Need:** Over the past five years, the WRP has transformed from a state and federal effort into a cooperative partnership of federal, state, and local agencies and CBOs. The greatest potential for increasing the pace of wetlands recovery in southern California is through increasing the commitment and capacity of local organizations to lead recovery efforts. Although many local agencies are willing to take on greater responsibility, most require substantial technical assistance in identifying, developing, and implementing projects. The proposed program will help to meet this need.

**Greater-Than-Local Interest:** One of the primary goals of the Wetlands Recovery Project is to coordinate wetland acquisition and restoration projects on a regional basis in order to avoid fragmented and piecemeal efforts. The proposed authorization will further the WRP's efforts to develop and implement a regional wetland strategy.

#### **Additional Criteria**

**Leverage:** It is expected that by increasing the participation of local partners in wetlands recovery projects in southern California, Conservancy funding of WRP projects will be leveraged by an increased contribution of local funding and in-kind assistance. In addition, the proposed program will help local partners to identify other likely sources of federal, state, local, and private funds for these projects.

**Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** The Coastal Conservancy has invested a large amount of funding and staff resources into developing the WRP and implementing projects through it. The proposed local assistance program will facilitate these efforts and will further the Conservancy's goals for coastal wetlands and watersheds in the region.

**Cooperation:** The Wetlands Recovery Project is a model of cooperation between public and private partners, as well as between federal, state, and local interests. The program has integrated disparate planning and restoration efforts throughout the southern California into a coordinated, regional effort. It is a model for cooperative regional partnerships throughout the state.



CONSISTENCY WITH

THE COASTAL ACT: The proposed WRP local assistance program will further the efforts of the WRP to implement a regional strategy for wetlands recovery in southern California. Thus, the project will further the planning and management policies contained in Section 30231 of the Public Resources Code, which states: "the biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored. . . ."

COMPLIANCE

WITH CEQA: The proposed authorization does not have the potential to result in any physical changes to the environment and therefore is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as provided in 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15378.



## THOMAS W. WILSON

CHAIRMAN

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT

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February 21, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Fax: 510.286.0470

Dear Chairman Morabito:

I am writing in support of a \$450,000 grant to Environment Now to direct the WRP Local Assistance Program.

Environment Now provides funds and technical support to communities and community-based organizations, empowering them to take greater responsibility for resource protection in their areas. This organization has been a dynamic partner in the effort to create county task forces to energize the Wetlands Recovery Project at the local level. In fact, Environment Now chairs the Public Advisory Committee of the Wetlands Recovery Project and serves as the vital organizational hub for the WRP's extensive and growing network of local partners in the 5-county Coastal Southern California region.

Environment Now's leadership in helping counties, cities and communities take on wetlands restoration, protection, and management has made an important difference. As the state faces huge budget challenges, this local leadership could make the difference between programs that languish for lack of coordination and management due to staffing shortages and programs which flourish.

This grant will enable them to continue the work begun by the watershed coordinators -- with a more direct focus on project development and implementation. Their management responsibilities would include assisting WRP's local task forces in

- Setting local and regional priorities and providing staff assistance to the task forces
- Increasing technical expertise available on such issues as permitting, environmental review, invasive species, restoration design, monitoring, etc.
- Identifying appropriate sources of federal, state and private funding for wetland and watershed projects
- Developing and implementing wetland preservation and restoration projects

As Co-Chair of Orange County's local task force, I encourage you to consider the value of these services. We here in Orange County have been impressed with the WRP program and its ability to bring disparate counties and regions to the table and create a win-win framework that benefits us all. Funding Environment Now to continue these efforts would allow this good work to continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas W. Wilson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

THOMAS W. WILSON

Chairman, Orange County Board of Supervisors  
Chairman, Orange County Coastal Coalition  
Co-Chair, Orange County Task Force, WRP



February 21, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chairman  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Fax: 510.286.0470

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**Supporting Organizations**

Amigos de Bolsa Chica  
Audubon, Sea & Sage Chapter  
Bolsa Chica Land Trust  
Caspers Wilderness Park  
Volunteers  
Equestrian Coalition of O.C.  
Environmental Nature Center  
Huntington Bch Wetlands Con-  
servancy & Wildlife Care Center  
Laguna Canyon Conservancy  
Laguna Canyon Foundation  
Laguna Greenbelt, Inc.  
Newport Conservancy  
Sierra Club, Orange City Group  
Southeast Huntington Beach  
Homeowners  
Surfriders Foundation,  
Newport Beach Chapter  
Stop Polluting Our Newport  
Upper Bay Naturalists & Frie-  
Wilderness Park Trust Fund

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Jan Vandersloot, M.D.

Subject: Wetlands Recovery Project Grant of \$450,000

Dear Chairman Morabito and members of the Commission:

The Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, Inc. (FHBP) is the Orange County non-profit organization which works closely with the Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP). I co-chair the Orange County Task Force and many FHBP members are actively engaged in support of the Project.

For the past year, we have been able to accelerate the work through the assistance of a Watershed Coordinator who helps focus on project development and implementation. Watershed Coordinators not only provide needed expertise but help to consolidate and train volunteers.

This grant of \$450,000 enabling an extension of the Watershed Coordinator positions will pay off in many ways. The work of wetlands restoration, project and management must increasingly be assumed by local communities. This grant will directly contribute to the building of capacity, focus and expertise within the Task Force.

We strongly support the Environment Now organization and believe it to be an appropriate recipient of a grant for a Wetlands Recovery Project Local Assistance Program. We will work closely with them and Coastal Conservancy staff to be sure that appropriate work programs and schedules are developed and carried out.

We look forward to continuing our work with the WRP and understand the need to be efficient in setting priorities, increasing technical expertise, seeking all possible funding, and implementing projects.

Thank you very much for your work on behalf of coastal wetlands and watersheds in southern California.

Sincerely,

Jean H. Watt, President

**SUSAN J. ROSE**  
County Supervisor  
Second District

**ALISSA HUMMER**  
Executive Staff Assistant

**RACHEL L. COUCH**  
Administrative Assistant



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February 24, 2003

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**

Paul Morabito, Chair  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Fax: 510.286.0470

Dear Chairman Morabito:

I am writing to request that you approve the grant to Environment Now to manage the Wetlands Recovery Project Local Assistance Program (Item on the February 27th agenda).


Environment Now is a highly regarded, non-profit foundation based in Santa Monica that promotes environmental activities throughout the state, but whose primary focus has been on the Southern California Coast. Environment Now provides funds and technical support to communities and community-based organizations, empowering them to take greater responsibility for resource protection in their areas. Environment Now also chairs the Public Advisory Committee of the Wetlands Recovery Project and has served as the vital organizational hub for the WRP's extensive and growing network of local partners in the 5-county Coastal Southern California region.

As a co-chair of the Santa Barbara County Local Task Force, I have seen the development and growing importance of the local partners and participants in the work of the Wetlands Recovery Project. In Santa Barbara County we are finding ways to increase the county's role in watershed planning through implementation of several pilot projects. These efforts would not have come about without the active involvement of the local task force members and input from other county task forces. Through this collaboration we are articulating a vision for a more effective county role in proactive, collaborative coastal resource protection and decision making.

The work of wetlands restoration, protection, and management must increasingly be assumed by local communities and local government. State agencies can aid this process, but leadership must reside in the region. Environment Now is particularly well suited to coordinate a locally based and locally led effort, tapping community-based authorities, organizational capacities, and resources for the purpose of wetlands recovery—greatly leveraging what state funds alone could accomplish.

The Coastal Conservancy shines as an example of a government agency that trusts the people and is willing to engage local interests as equal partners in conservation work. Thank you for the time and energy you contribute to this wonderful cause.

Sincerely,



Susan J. Rose  
Second District Supervisor



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
**REGION IX**  
**75 Hawthorne Street**  
**San Francisco, CA 94105-3901**

February 26, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Morabito

The purpose of this letter is to convey our support for the Wetlands Recovery Project's Local Assistance Program. As a member of the WRP- Board of Governors, EPA Region IX has been involved in the development of the WRP since its inception. We applaud the efforts of the Coastal Conservancy Board and staff in recognizing the importance of our local partners in carrying out the work of the WRP. Much of the success of the WRP is due to the broad-based collaboration among the federal, state, and local partners. We have reached a point though in our maturation, where we must recognize the limitations of the state and federal partners to effectively deliver the program. We must build local capacity to realize the goals of the WRP.

EPA recommends the Coastal Conservancy Board approve a grant award of \$450,000 to Environment Now to direct a WRP Local Assistance Program. The Local Assistance Program will continue the great work begun by the watershed coordinators, by focusing on project development and implementation. Environment Now would provide technical assistance to local government agencies and community based organizations (CBOs) to facilitate implementation of projects to acquire, restore, and enhance coastal wetlands and coastal watersheds. The proposed project will help the WRP to increase the pace, effectiveness, and cost-efficiency of project implementation.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you or the Board members have any questions or comments, please call me at 415/972-3417.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Paul Michel". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the typed name.

Paul Michel, Acting Chief  
Southern California Office, Water Division  
Chair, WRP Managers Group

February 23, 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Support for Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Local Assistance Program**

Dear Mr. Morabito,

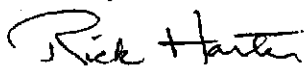
The LA/SG Watershed Council, as Co-Chair of the Los Angeles County Task Force, would like to express our strong support for the proposed Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Local Assistance Program to be funded by the Coastal Conservancy under Proposition 40. This program would sustain efforts that have been initiated over the past two years and strengthen the role of local partners in achieving the objectives of preserving and restoring coastal wetlands and watersheds in Southern California.

Environment Now has been a vital force in the WRP, both in leading the Public Advisory Committee toward establishing innovative and effective institutional partnerships, and in providing an organizational hub for building local capacity in community-based organizations to pursue wetlands objectives. Environment Now is currently engaged in administering a bond-funded grant from the SWRCB that has substantially increased the commitment and capacity of local organizations to lead recovery efforts. The proposed program would build upon the experience gained under the existing grant and continue the momentum that has been generated by local partners. Environment Now has superbly demonstrated its proficiency in cooperative endeavors with the Conservancy and WRP local partners; and in light of its history with the WRP, it can be expected to carry out the proposed program with great effectiveness.

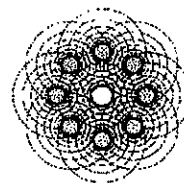
The Local Assistance Program is intended to advance the objectives of the WRP by increasing the pace of project development and implementation, and the effectiveness of restoration plans and activities. The experience gained by WRP Watershed Coordinators active in field-level reconnaissance over the past year indicates that the proposed elements of the program (setting priorities, increasing technical expertise, securing funding, etc) are essential to effective action. The program is therefore crucially important to achieve the mission of the WRP, which is to facilitate wetland projects on-the-ground.

The Coastal Conservancy and its dedicated staff are to be congratulated on the way that the WRP has developed into a truly precedent-setting endeavor. The proposed program will enhance that legacy.

Sincerely,



Rick Harter  
Executive Director



**THE LOS ANGELES & SAN GABRIEL RIVERS**

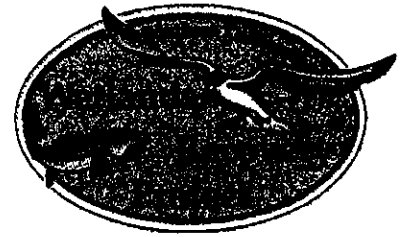
111 N. Hope Street, Suite 627, Los Angeles, CA 90012 T: (213) 367-4111 F: (213) 367-4138

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**Official Liaisons** Jim Bartel, Doreen Stadtlander, Alt. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Carl Blum American Society of Civil Engineers; Jody Cook U.S. Forest Service; Ane Daister Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; Fran Diamond, John Bishop, Alt. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board; Laura Gentile U.S. EPA; Joan Greenwood Friends of the Los Angeles River; Larry Kaplan The Trust for Public Land; Christopher Kroll State Coastal Conservancy; Lynne Dwyer North East Trees; Melanie Winter The River Project; Dan Young, Brian Whelan, Alt. Army Corps of Engineers

web site: [www.lasgrwc.org](http://www.lasgrwc.org)

**Santa Barbara County Task Force  
Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project**  
c/o Community Environmental Council  
930 Miramonte Drive  
Santa Barbara, California 93109



24 February 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland CA 94612-2530

Re: *Board meeting February 27:  
WRP local assistance program grant*

Dear Mr. Morabito:

On behalf of the Santa Barbara County Task Force of the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, I am writing to urge the board of the Coastal Conservancy to approve the proposed \$450,000 grant to Environment Now to fund a Wetlands Recovery Project local assistance program.

As outlined in the staff report (to be heard at your February 27th board meeting in Oakland), the grant would allow Environment Now to provide technical assistance to local government and community-based organizations to facilitate implementation of projects to acquire, restore, and enhance coastal wetlands and watersheds.

One of the most significant components of the WRP's regional efforts has been its locally-oriented public outreach and capacity-building programs. Those programs have had a huge impact in developing and promoting the restoration projects that are the fundamental mission of the Recovery Project. Unfortunately, however, the budgetary crisis now faced by state and local governments creates a serious risk that those critical programs will be eliminated unless creative ways can be found to continue funding them.

Local communities must increasingly assume responsibility and leadership for wetlands restoration and protection. The staff proposal for a SCC grant to Environment Now offers an excellent framework for leveraging state bond monies with strong local initiatives. And Environment Now is well suited to coordinate this locally-based and



locally-led effort---one that will capitalize on community-based capacities and resources to promote this important regional recovery effort.

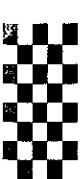
Thank you for your consideration and approval of the proposed grant, as well as for all the work that the Coastal Conservancy does for wetlands restoration and protection in Southern California.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Thiel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

R. E. Thiel

Cc: Trish Chapman



Mr. Paul Morabito  
State Coastal Conservancy Board Chair  
Oakland, California


Dear Mr. Morabito,

I write this to you as a founding member of the Public Advisory Committee of the Wetlands Recovery Project and as a co-author of the County Wetland Task Forces concept.

Providing a vehicle for interaction between business, government and NGOs in the realm of wetland protection and enhancement has been most beneficial to all concerned. Communication is one of the necessary components for progress on the environmental "front." The PAC has served Southern and Central California WELL. As an adjunct to that organization, the five county task forces, comprised of a supervisor and NGO as co-chairs, organization representatives, agency personnel, the general public again having the opportunity to dialogue and work together has been fantastic. But, even greater than all the above, is the presence of the Wetland Coordinator. In our county, the coordinator has worked tirelessly to fill planning gaps by encouraging entities to initiate projects which qualify for funding by the Conservancy. The State Coastal Conservancy deserves great accolades for their efforts to provide the mechanisms by which wetlands can be restored in California. Southern and Central California has never before had such a cohesive organizational structure as it struggles with the issues surrounding watershed health.

Please accept the excellent staff report and give the Wetlands Recovery Project necessary funds to continue which, in my mind, will lead to greater environmental health in our area. We are most appreciative of Trish Chapman's involvement with the Recovery Project. The staff report captures the essence of the task forces' spirit and brings Environment Now into the mix which is perfect.

Sincerely,



Roma Armbrust

Co-chair, Ventura County Wetlands Task Force  
Member, Public Advisory Committee, Wetlands Recovery Project

# Bolsa Chica Conservancy



*A Non-Profit, Non-Political Corporation for the Benefit of Bolsa Chica Wetlands*

February 21, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Fax: 510.286.0470

Dear Chairman Morabito:

I am writing to request that you approve the grant to Environment Now to manage the Wetlands Recovery Project Local Assistance Program (item on the February 27<sup>th</sup> agenda).

The Bolsa Chica Conservancy has been very fortunate to be able to send a representative to the important annual wetlands recovery conference in Sacramento each spring, due to a stipend grant which Environment Now has overseen in the past for such activities.

Environment Now is a highly regarded, non-profit foundation based in Santa Monica that promotes environmental activities throughout the state, but whose primary focus has been on the Southern California Coast. Environment Now provides funds and technical support to communities and community-based organizations, empowering them to take greater responsibility for resource protection in their areas. Environment Now also chairs the Public Advisory Committee of the Wetlands Recovery Project and has served as the vital organizational hub for the WRP's extensive and growing network of local partners in the 5-county Coastal Southern California region.

The work of wetlands restoration, protection, and management must increasingly be assumed by local communities and local government. State agencies can aid this process, but leadership must reside in the region. Environment Now is particularly well suited to coordinate a locally based and locally led effort, tapping community-based authorities, organizational capacities, and resources for the purpose of wetlands recovery—greatly leveraging what state funds alone could accomplish.

Email  
adrienne@bolsachica.org

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(714) 846-1114

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(714) 846-4065

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Huntington Beach  
California 92649-4263

The Coastal Conservancy shines as an example of a government agency that trusts the people and is willing to engage local interests as equal partners in conservation work. Thank you for the time and energy you contribute to this wonderful cause.

Thank you for your interest and support,

*Adrienne Morrison*  
Adrienne Morrison  
Executive Director

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