

6. LETTERS OF COMMITMENT

California Native Plant Society, Dorothy King Young Chapter

June 11, 2019

Becky Miller

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Management Specialist 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-1729
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Ms. Miller,

The California Native Plant Society, Dorothy King Young Chapter strongly supports the California State Coastal Conservancy's application to the National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program for the Mill Bend Conservation Project located in Mendocino County, California.

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS), founded in 1965 is a statewide non-profit with a mission to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS is made up of 35 chapters, located across the state and in Baja California. The Dorothy King Young Chapter (DKY), founded in 1966, serves coastal Mendocino County and the northern coastal areas of Sonoma County. The chapter hosts educational outreach forums, leads community field trips, and offers plants for sale and sponsors weed eradication. Our most recent events included guided spring wildflower walks, a public wildflower show and an ice plant pulling event followed by the planting of coastal succulents. We also provide input to governmental (CDFW, County Planning departments, Coastal Commission, etc) and private agencies about projects of local and statewide interest which may have effects on native plants. Our board, as well as our membership is made up of professional botanists as well as native plant enthusiasts with strong affinity to the native coastal environment.

The goals of CNPS directly align with several of the goals of the Mill Bend Conservation Project (Project) that preserves and protects 113 acres at the mouth of the Gualala River from future urban development, including 60 acres of critical, declining coastal wetland habitat. These wetlands include important emergent tidal marsh, palustrine scrub/shrub and palustrine forest – areas that are important habitat for wildlife as well as important to successful estuary system functions.

The project will protect and eventually overtime, restore the Mill Bend properties by preventing further degradation by illegal OHV use and homeless encampments, followed by future phases targeting invasive plant removal/maintenance, and eventual replanting of select California native plants correct for the various habitats. CNPS DKY supports these planned efforts that will eventually expand the area's native biodiversity.

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As education and outreach are core goals of the Society, the DKY Chapter offers support to ensure all outreach is botanically accurate, including such efforts as brochures, trail maps and planned educational signage for the expanded California Coastal Trail. In addition we will lead two guided coastal wetland tours annually during the four year grant cycle.

Eliminating the most invasive, non-native plant species is a key concern of our coastal chapter, in particular, efforts to eradicate alien plants with a 'high' rank on the Cal IPC ratings (California Invasive Plant Council). These super invasives can be found on the Mill Bend properties and include pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) and French broom (*Genista monspessulana*). CNPS DKY will contribute \$1,500 for pampas grass removal combined with educational outreach. This effort might include leading a community hands on event to remove select non-natives (vinca, wild oats, mustard, etc) and replanting appropriate California natives to restore the habitat. This will be a rewarding and educational moment for the community.

CNPS pledges \$1,500 for invasive removal/outreach and volunteer hours to support eight guided tours over four years (2hrs/tour for 16 hours), expertise for botanically correct brochures/signage, projected at 12 hours, and leadership for a community hands on day involving three chapter members at 4 hours each for 12 hours. In total 40 volunteer hours (over four years) rated at \$25/hour for in-kind of \$1,000. DKY's total in-kind commitment toward the Mill Bend Conservation Project is \$2,500.

CNPS respectfully encourages the USFWS to support the important coastal wetlands project at the Gualala River.

Sincerely,

Nancy Morin

President, Dorothy King Young Chapter California Native Plant Society nancy.morin@nau.edu