



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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April 22, 1999

AGENDA: May 7, 1999

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Update on Santa Cruz County Sanctuary Inter-Agency Task Force Activities

Dear **Members** of the Board:

The Santa Cruz County Sanctuary Inter-Agency Task Force was formed in 1994 to design and implement strategies to maximize the positive economic, interpretive and education benefits that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary brings to Santa Cruz County. On May 6, 1997, your Board approved the Task Force's Action Plan to realize: (1) a Sanctuary Scenic Trail; (2) a Sanctuary Seal Conservation Program; and (3) a Sanctuary-oriented Visitor and Marine Discovery Center.

Sanctuary Scenic Trail. The creation of a scenic bicycle and pedestrian trail system was identified as an important first step toward achieving these goals. The Sanctuary Scenic Trail will provide a major opportunity to link transportation, environmental, recreational, cultural and educational elements and major activity centers of the region as well as to unify our County's waterfront areas. As your Board is aware, six members of the Task Force recently submitted a joint grant application for local TEA funding to begin the first phase of trail development.

Sanctuary Seal Conservation Program. Recent activities have focused on determining if creation of a Seal program, which would provide education and training on the Sanctuary for local businesses, is an appropriate way to encourage conservation and protection of the Sanctuary and to involve businesses in activities that enhance our community's positioning as the gateway to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

A marketing, advertising and design firm was hired to develop a survey instrument and conduct focus groups with local businesses to determine how businesses could benefit from and participate in such a program. The consultant's report is on file with the Clerk of the Board, with the Executive Summary attached to this letter for your review. The Task Force is in the process of reviewing the comments and the consultant's recommendations to determine how best to proceed with this program. Staff will return to your Board with any updates or recommendations as needed.

Sanctuary Visitor and Marine Discovery Center. The Task Force is currently working with the City of Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz City Museum of Natural History and the Santa Cruz County Conference and Visitors Council to explore possible collaborative opportunities.

As your Board may recall, the activities and objectives contained in the Action Plan have been designed to take advantage of existing expertise and programs currently underway or under consideration within the Santa Cruz area by identifying areas for collaboration. This same multi-jurisdictional, inter-agency approach has been successful in other venues, where agency staff and budgets have been limiting factors. The Task Force has aimed to be a consensus-building effort which has brought a wide array of stakeholders to the table during the planning process, and will continue to rely on these collaborative partnerships throughout the implementation phase.

Financial contributions by Task Force members are an important resource to seed other contributions, to act as a local match for grant applications and to assist implementation efforts. To date, these modest annual contributions have leveraged over \$90,000 in grant awards to further the Task Force's efforts, and over 200 hours in technical assistance from the National Parks Service Interpretation staff. On April 16, 1999, the Task Force approved a motion to request annual contributions in the amount of \$1,000 be solicited from member organizations for FY 1999-00.

In closing, the Task Force recognizes how important your Board's leadership and participation has been to this process and requests your continued support of these activities.

Therefore, it is RECOMMENDED that your Board:

- (1) Accept and file this update report on the Santa Cruz County Sanctuary Inter-Agency Task Force activities; and
- (2) Authorize your Board's Chairperson to send letters to each of the Task Force's participating members seeking a \$1,000 contribution towards implementing the recommended strategies for FY 1999-00, with the understanding that these funds will be used to seed other contributions, to act as a local match for grant applications and to assist in implementation efforts.

Very truly yours,



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

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**Santa Cruz County
Sanctuary Inter-Agency Task Force:
Sanctuary Seal Program**

Executive Summary

The primary purpose of these focus groups was to determine how businesses want to participate in the Sanctuary Seal Program. This training program and certification was offered to the focus groups participants after their current practices, training and education were discussed.

Participants have been changing their practices over the years, both to comply with new regulations and because of their awareness that the Monterey Bay is a Marine Sanctuary. Training has been offered only to comply with new procedures.

Both focus groups want to benefit from the Sanctuary but are struggling with ways to do this. They try to define the Sanctuary to customers in a way that people can understand what it is. More important, they want to advise tourists on how to engage the Sanctuary, i.e., activities that encourage tourists to extend their stays in Santa Cruz County. At the same time, most businesses are not willing to have staff take time to educate tourists. A couple of tourist businesses would be willing to send staff for training, but most want the staff to offer only a one or two sentence explanation and then direct the tourist to a display and brochure for more information.

The groups' recommendations are that:

- Educational displays that generate interest in the Sanctuary be placed at various points. It was said that people are more interested in the activities they can engage than in learning about the marine life in the Sanctuary.
- A color brochure be developed that explains the Sanctuary, answering general questions.
- Finally, a weekly activity schedule be developed to point tourists to ways they can engage the Sanctuary. Most businesses would be willing to provide space for the display, plaques and literature. There was a consensus that businesses would be willing to pay for the displays and brochures.
- Other ideas related to developing a website for the Sanctuary and having TCI Cable do more on Channel 3.