



CITY OF ENCINITAS

Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Cardiff State Beach Living Shoreline Project Dedicated Today

Project Adds Sand Dunes for Flood Protection and Protect Endangered Species Completed in Cardiff-by-the-Sea

Encinitas, CA – North San Diego County residents and officials today celebrated the opening of the Cardiff State Beach Living Shoreline project. The half-mile coastal area located between Restaurant Row and South Cardiff State Beach, just south of the Chart House Restaurant, was created to add a ‘living shoreline’ sand dune system to protect Coast Highway 101 from ocean surges. The project accomplishes this protection using man-made materials, native materials and locally sourced dune plants, which provide additional ecological uplift such as increased biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Sand dunes are naturally and historically part of the Encinitas coastline. They provide a number of ecological and human benefits, including wildlife habitat for native and migrating species and landward protection from sea level rise and storm surge flooding. The shoreline now supports flowering native plant species with coastal dune plants beginning to take root. It’s anticipated that the protected dunes will host endangered species, like the Snowy Plover, that depend on undisturbed sand for roosting habitat.

The Living Shoreline project also provides for improved public access to the beach. A new pedestrian pathway was constructed alongside the dunes and runs the full length of the one-half mile project site, connecting with the sidewalk at the southern end of the beach. Coastal access through the dunes to the beach from the existing parking areas along Coast Highway 101 is encouraged with post and rope fencing designating the access paths.

“This project is an example of state, regional and local cooperation at its finest, with agencies uniting to protect our environment, wildlife habitat, beaches and transportation infrastructure from the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our many partners on this project,” said Encinitas Mayor Catherine Blakespear.

The Living Shoreline is a project led by the State Coastal Conservancy and the City of Encinitas. The City partnered with the Nature Collective (formerly known as the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy), California

State Parks, the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA), Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California – San Diego (UCSD), and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The project beautifies, protects and improves habitat along this stretch of the Cardiff State Beach.

“We encourage everyone to join the Nature Collective in ongoing coastal dune habitat events,” said Bradley Nussbaum, Habitat Management Director for the Nature Collective. “This dynamic partnership will yield amazing benefits for plants and animals that depend on the shoreline and is a community-centered way to be a part of the bigger picture of nature for all.”

“Cardiff Beach’s dunes are an example of green infrastructure, an innovative new concept in shoreline resilience,” said Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer for California State Coastal Conservancy “This project uses natural features to protect communities from sea level rise while also creating wildlife habitat.”

“Working together with our partners, we have restored a new natural resource dimension to Cardiff State Beach - a coastal dune system,” said Kimberly Weinstein, San Diego Coast District Superintendent for California State Parks. “This new landform adds rich upland habitat and beach that complements Cardiff State Beach’s world class aquatic recreation and the underwater resources of the Swami’s State Marine Conservation Area.”

The Cardiff State Beach Living Shoreline project began in October 2018 using excavated sands from the San Elijo Lagoon inlet. King tides, the region’s most extreme high and low tides, provided a glimpse of the future of rising seas, along with significant winter storms that reclaimed some of the excavated sands. Construction progressed in three phases, each one-third of the project length, with sands for the last phase brought over by the April inlet opening.

Riprap, or large granite boulders, were first laid on the foundation and reconfigured to key the project to grade. All excavated materials were sorted onsite, with the extracted cobbles being placed at the end of slope. From there, beach sand was placed atop the riprap and “hummocks” or mounds were contoured and planted with native dune species.

As phases progressed, the Nature Collective’s staff ecologists and community volunteers installed native dune plants and placed educational signs describing the newly created habitat. The planted native species’ roots will anchor the sands from shifting winds and storm surges.

Habitat restoration and maintenance of the coastal dunes will be ongoing for the first five years, as the Nature Collective and doctoral students and researchers at UCLA and Scripps Institute for Oceanography monitor the half-mile site wildlife use, growth and establishment of native dune plants, and dune system structure sustainability.

Funding for the \$2.5 million Cardiff State Beach Living Shoreline project substantially came from the California Coastal Conservancy, the California Ocean Protection Council, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

Businesses located along Highway 101 and the Cardiff State Beach parking lot have already been experiencing flooding and associated damage from winter storm surge. The Cardiff State Beach Living Shoreline project reflects an adaptation strategy that could be implemented quickly in an area where conditions are evolving and already experiencing flooding and extreme storm conditions.

The Living Shoreline Project is a pilot project for southern California cities facing similar sea level rise and climate change challenges. These challenges include maintaining infrastructure in the coastal zone, while following the guidance of the California Coastal Commission to limit the use of “hard” protection techniques, such as sea walls and revetments.

The California Coastal Commission recommends in the 2018 adopted Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance that activities and projects that protect, enhance, and maximize coastal resources and access, including giving full consideration to innovative nature-based approaches such as living shoreline techniques, should be explored and given priority.

To access images of the Cardiff State Beach Living Shoreline Dedication Ceremony on May 22, please visit thenaturecollective.org/media

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About the Nature Collective (formerly San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy)

The Nature Collective exists to drive a passion for nature, for all. Our vision is a world where everyone experiences, connects with, and protects nature.

About the City of Encinitas

Located along six miles of Pacific Ocean coastline in northern San Diego County, Encinitas is home to approximately 60,000 residents and is characterized by coastal beaches, cliffs, flat-topped coastal areas, steep mesa bluffs and rolling hills. The city was incorporated in 1986, drawing together the communities of New Encinitas, Old Encinitas, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Olivenhain and Leucadia.

About California State Parks

With more than 340 miles of coastline, 970 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites and 4,500 miles of trails, State Parks provides for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. Off-highway motor vehicle recreation, boating activities, horseback riding, on- and off-road cycling, hiking, camping and rock climbing are some of the recreational activities enjoyed in 280 state parks.

About California State Coastal Conservancy

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency established in 1976 to protect and improve natural lands and waterways, help people access and enjoy the outdoors, and sustain local economies along the length of California’s coast and around San Francisco Bay.