



## **County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors**

### **Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** Parks, Open Spaces, and Cultural Services

**Subject:** Greyhound Rock Operating Agreement with CDFW

**Meeting Date:** June 24, 2025

**Formal Title:** Approve operating agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for Greyhound Rock coastal access, and take related actions

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Approve the Operating Agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding the operation of Greyhound Rock coastal access; and
2. Authorize the Director of County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services to sign the Operating Agreement and related documents on behalf of the County.

### **Executive Summary**

The Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department (Parks) seeks to enter into a short-term Operating Agreement (OA) with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). On June 25, 2024, the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Parks and CDFW, outlining mutual responsibilities for the transfer of property ownership to Parks. One of the MOU's deliverables is finalizing the OA to support interim affordable accommodations and educational programming, advancing the shared goal of property transfer.

### **Discussion**

Parks previously operated and maintained Greyhound Rock under a long-term agreement with CDFW from its opening in 1962 until 2012, and informally until July 1, 2023. On June 25, 2024, the Board unanimously approved the MOU between Parks and CDFW. As part of this agreement, an OA between the County and CDFW has been developed.

Parks has been working with CDFW to finalize the OA, which outlines conditions for transferring the property as specified in the MOU. This transfer is contingent upon the County constructing and operating interim affordable accommodations, educational programming, and maintenance or improvement of habitat, coastal fishing, and public access to the property. To facilitate these goals during the interim period, the proposed OA establishes provisions for the property use, facility improvements, habitat and resource protection, termination terms, and all relevant legal and administrative conditions. Specifically, on the northern portion of Greyhound Rock, the County shall provide for affordable low-cost accommodations such as portable trailers and or "dry camping" involving camping in a recreational vehicle (RV), van or motor home with no hookups for power and water with minimal environmental impact.

The affordable accommodations and natural resources education programming at Greyhound Rock aims to enhance coastal accessibility for all County residents, regardless of socioeconomic status. Year-round programs will be offered for underserved youth, particularly those from South County. This program will provide low-impact, minimalist overnight accommodations and repurpose existing structures for

outdoor education programming. Activities may include workshops on coastal diversity, plant and animal adaptations, watershed functionality, community and economic stewardship of natural resources, and ecological processes. The program's goals are to:

- Inspire interest in environmental science
- Increase STEM development
- Foster connections to coastal resources
- Promote environmental stewardship.

The proposed camping accommodations will be integrated into existing structures in the northern part of the property, with additional upgrades for group areas and programs. Educational programming will take place throughout the site. Given the significant investment in this project, the County seeks full ownership of the property rather than entering another long-term OA, which will allow Parks to apply for significantly more grants to fund construction and support resources.

The agreement is effective for up to two years unless renewed, extended, or terminated earlier, including upon property transfer or MOU-based termination. Either party may terminate the agreement with at least 90 days' written notice.

This OA is in accordance with Parks Strategic Plan Goals: Goal 1. Great Facilities, Goal 3. Awesome Programs, Goal 4. Effective Stewardship, and Goal 5 Equity of the County Parks Strategic Plan.

### **Financial Impact**

The maintenance of Greyhound Rock has been incorporated into the Parks Maintenance Budget (GL 492300 PARKS OPERATIONS MAINT). Funding from the Regional Transportation Commission for the maintenance of Segment 5 and will offset regular staffing costs associated with this site; any remaining costs should be minimal and are expected to be offset with revenue generated on site.

The proposed Interim affordable accommodations and educational programming is in development. Multiple opportunities for grants and alternative funding sources have been identified, and the department will access these funds in order to launch the Interim Affordable Accommodations and Educational Programming. Specifically, over \$5 million has been set aside by the California Coastal Commission specific to the development of this project and associated program costs. This funding can only be used for the Greyhound Rock County Park low-cost outdoor accommodations and educational programming. If this funding is not used for these specific purposes within the next five years, it will be directed to projects determined by the City of Santa Cruz.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

Equity Framework - County Facilities & Infrastructure, Plans, Policies & Budgets  
Operational Plan - Sustainable Environment, Operational Excellence  
Climate Action - Natural & Working Lands, Wildfire Prevention

### **Submitted By:**

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

**Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

**Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.