

## Wavecrest Coastal Trail Project (Phase 2)

### FAQ (updated October 2023)

**What is this project Coastside Land Trust (CLT) is planning?** CLT plans to construct multi-use trails that will fill a gap in the California Coastal Trail on the Wavecrest bluffs between Poplar and Redondo beaches. The project also includes stairs access down to Redondo Beach and connector trails to existing parking on Wavecrest Road at Smith Field Ballpark and new parking with drinking water and bathrooms along Redondo Beach Road that is part of this project.

The City of Half Moon Bay Planning Commission will be reviewing this project for a permit on October 10, 2023.

**What is CLT/What does CLT do?** CLT is a local nonprofit land trust (established in 1997) that owns and cares for open space on the coastal bluffs between Half Moon Bay and Montara (to the north). We protect the natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, historical and agricultural resources of these amazing places for present and future generations. CLT accomplishes this through active management of the lands we own, doing restoration and public access projects (such as this one!), as well as our regular volunteer stewardship events and activities. We also offer high-quality education and outreach programs that help the community connect with our open spaces and develop stewardship skills to become life-long caretakers of open space.

### Project Details:

- >2.5 miles of Coastal Trail and connector trails with wayfinding and interpretive signage.
  - All trails will be 8 feet wide, compacted rock with 2-foot wide soft shoulders. (Same as Bird Trail coastal trail on the 50 acres). Using compacted rock ensures durability, and a firm surface for the trail that drains well. 2-foot-wide soft shoulder provides for equestrian use.
  - Puncheons –12-foot long wooden boardwalks – in a couple of spots where the trail crosses wet areas (drainages) will be 6 feet wide.
  - Trails set back minimum 60 feet from bluff edges to accommodate future bluff erosion.
  - 42-inch tall split rail fence used in hazardous areas and/or sensitive habitat areas.
  - Connector trails will link the Coastal Trail to the new beach access stairs as well as to the existing parking at Poplar Beach and Smith Field Ballpark (end of Wavecrest Road) and new parking along Redondo Beach Road.
- 2 sets of wooden stairs down to Redondo Beach from north and south sides of the large arroyo.
- 3 small gravel parking areas with ~ 80 spots in total along Redondo Beach Road. Amenities include:
  - A flush restroom and drinking water at the east-most parking area (which is adjacent to existing sewer & water lines)
  - Horse trailer parking at the western-most area.
  - Bike racks
  - Trash/recycling bins

- Existing informal parking on the bluff-edge parcel owned by CLT at the end of Redondo Beach Road will be closed off to vehicle access to address safety and erosion issues.
- On land owned by CLT within the project area, areas of bare ground (e.g., informal trails and parking area) will be restored to prevent further drainage problems and reestablish vegetation.
- Project does not include any paving.

**There are already trails out at Wavecrest and people can park at the end of Redondo Beach Road and get down to the beach from there. Why is this project needed?** There are 3 key reasons:

1. Protecting natural resources: Wavecrest is an incredible and special natural place that people want to enjoy for hiking, running, biking and horseback riding on the coastal bluffs; sunbathing and playing on the beach, and swimming and surfing in the ocean. It's especially well-loved for bird and wildlife watching – particularly for observing wintering raptors which can be seen hunting the voles and other critters that live in the coastal scrub, grasslands and wetlands here.
  - a. Unfortunately, we are loving Wavecrest to death. People using the ever-expanding web of informal trails that crisscross the bluffs are disturbing wildlife and damaging the habitats that wildlife depend upon. Furthermore, during the pandemic, public use of Wavecrest exploded and without sufficient trash and restroom facilities, trash and human waste at Wavecrest (esp near Redondo Beach Road) are growing problems.
  - b. This increased level of public use is not going away and it is not sustainable as it is.
  - c. This project won't eliminate these problems but it will go a long way towards reducing the negative impacts of public access, and enabling visitors to experience and enjoy Wavecrest in a safe and environmentally responsible manner
2. Accessibility and safe access:
  - a. Informal trails are not accessible to people with mobility issues or for families with strollers, and in the rainy season they become unsafe for all users. All trails, signage and parking areas and associated facilities will be universally accessible\* and safe for year-round use. The beach access stairs will not be universally accessible, but will create safe, year-round access for all other users. (\*Universally accessible includes ADA standards.)
  - b. Informal parking at the bluff edge at the end of Redondo Beach Road on the property owned by CLT is incredibly unsafe and causing rapid erosion of the bluffs which is threatening the City's road. Furthermore, public access requirements in the CA Coastal Act (enforced by the Coastal Commission) prevent the City and CLT from closing off this parking area until alternate parking is provided... which this project will do by providing safe, well-designed parking further inland along the road.
3. Slowing erosion: During storms water concentrates along the informal trails where the ground is compacted and depressed. These basically become drainage ditches and the water flowing out of them rapidly erodes bluff edges. Coastal bluffs naturally erode, but the erosion out here is really being sped up by the drainage issues caused by the informal trails as well as the many places where people scramble down to the beach (down the steep face of the bluff).

- a. By building well-designed and drained trails that are set back from the bluff edges (minimum 60-feet) and revegetating informal trails and bare ground (in areas owned by CLT) this project will consolidate much of the access onto the designated trails and fix drainage issues. This is what we did with the Bird Trail on the 50 acres and it has significantly slowed the erosion there.
- b. Building beach access stairs (with clear signage directing people to this beach access) will significantly reduce informal access.
- c. With new parking areas inland along Redondo Beach Road, the parcel at the end of the road that is currently used for parking will be closed off to vehicle access and reshaped (to prevent drainage issues) and revegetated with native grass species.

**Does trail or any part of the project go on private property? No.**

- Trail path (alignment) is entirely on CLT's property and the "paper streets" (rights of way) owned by the City of Half Moon Bay. The City is granting CLT an easement for use of the paper streets for the trail.
- Beach access stairs and new parking areas on Redondo Beach Rd also on CLT-owned properties.

**Will the trail/stairs/parking harm sensitive habitats (e.g. wetlands) or endangered species? No.**

- Project design:
  - Detailed assessment of Wavecrest area was done in advance of planning to enable CLT to design the project to not only avoid these types of impacts but also mitigate harm to sensitive habitats and species currently caused by informal public access.
  - The planned path for the trail utilizes avoid sensitive habitats and utilizes existing informal trails to minimize disturbance of new areas. There are only 2 spots where the trail cannot avoid a short overlap with wetlands and raised walkways (punchcons) constructed from non-pressure treated wood will be used to keep trail users separated from the habitat. The trail elevation and materials provide proper drainage which will reduce the erosion issues due to informal access that threaten sensitive habitats.
  - Engineering geologist and geotechnical engineer evaluated the stairs locations and developed the stairs design to withstand the harsh coastal environment and accommodate the bluff geology to maximize longevity and provide safe, year-round and environmentally protective beach access.
- During construction:
  - Timing will be during dry season and dry weather to avoid impacts to water quality and frogs and other sensitive wildlife.
  - Pre-construction biological surveys and monitoring of construction to identify (and fence off) a spot if it needs to be avoided (e.g. a nest) or if an animal enters work area and pause work until it can be moved or leaves on its own.
  - Construction equipment access will be limited to planned and approved staging areas and access routes (marked with orange construction fencing).