

CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Staff Recommendation

February 29, 2008

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTAL GEOTOURISM MAPGUIDE PROJECT:  
SALMON COUNTRY**

File No.: 08-004

Project Manager: Cina Loarie

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Consideration and possible Ocean Protection Council authorization to disburse up to \$87,500 for the planning and completion of the Northern California Coastal Geotourism MapGuide project: Salmon Country.

**LOCATION:** Statewide

**STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE:** Education and Outreach and Ocean and Coastal Ecosystems

**AGENCY OR ENTITY RECOMMENDING PROJECT:** Ocean Protection Council

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [Project Location](#)

Exhibit 2: [Past Geotourism MapGuide Examples](#)

Exhibit 3: [Letters of Support](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The Ocean Protection Council hereby approves the disbursement of an amount not to exceed \$87,500 to the National Geographic Society to develop the Northern California Coastal Geotourism MapGuide project: 'Salmon Country'.”

Staff further recommends that the Council adopt the following findings:

“Based on the staff report and attached exhibits, the Council hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the purposes of Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, the Ocean Protection Act.
  2. The proposed is consistent with the Ocean Protection Council's funding guidelines.
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3. The National Geographic Society is a nonprofit organization existing under the provision of U.S. Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code."

### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) authorize the disbursement of up to \$87,500 for the planning and completion of the Northern California Coastal Geotourism MapGuide project entitled "Salmon Country" (Salmon Map). The proposed project will produce a double-sided map-brochure with an overarching theme of a sustainable salmon fishery and the need for a healthy land-sea connection. The Salmon Map will identify local, sustainable-fishery related businesses and areas of the natural and cultural heritage of the unique northern California coastal region.

### **Background**

In 2003, the National Geographic Society's (NGS) Center for Sustainable Destinations inaugurated a new product combining the expertise of the center, the expert design capabilities of National Geographic Maps, and the involvement of local people in tourism destinations to ensure wise stewardship of cultural, historic, and natural resources. The maps are designed to encourage sustainable tourism, or "geotourism." The "Geotourism MapGuide" functions as a tool to implement geotourism, defined as, "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents."

The Geotourism MapGuide is developed in partnership with participating members of the local community. The MapGuide is designed to market sustainable tourism choices to foreign and domestic tourists, increase local incomes, build local knowledge and pride, and perhaps most importantly for the OPC, produce economic incentives for the conservation of local environmental assets, including salmon.

Conservation of salmon is critical as salmon populations throughout California have declined dramatically in recent years. Freshwater habitat in coastal streams and rivers has been lost or degraded, which has resulted in severe impacts to fish populations that rely on those habitats. For example, the number of returning natural salmon spawners in the Klamath River has decreased from over 1,000,000 to a few tens of thousands in recent years. In 2006, because of the low numbers of Klamath-system salmon, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council closed the commercial ocean fishery along 700 miles of coast from Monterey County in California to northern Oregon. This closure severely impacted fishermen and their communities along the coast, northern California tribes, and all people who rely on salmon.

Salmon and steelhead populations have been steadily decreasing in northern California for at least the past 50 years. Development of a map of the significant salmon-related resources and business on the north coast will increase the awareness of this important, yet struggling species.

Since the inception of the Geotourism MapGuide project at NGS, several successful maps have been produced including those for Vermont, Guatemala, Romania, and the Sonora Desert. The MapGuides have been shown to attract the most beneficial, least disruptive forms of tourism to

these locations, while supporting local businesses and communities.

### **Project Description**

The overarching theme of the Salmon Map will be to promote activities which serve to protect and sustain salmon as a resource of special significance. Essential to this idea is that there is an inextricable connection between healthy populations of salmon and a healthy and thriving ecosystem. The Salmon Map will not only promote geotourism assets (which include cultural, historical, and environmental resources) and tourism activities beneficial to local salmon populations, but will also help local communities discover their distinctive tourism assets while providing them with economic incentives for protecting their natural resources.

Creation of the Salmon Map results in two benefits to local communities. First, each community takes part in the creation of a map which outlines the best resources the area has to offer with the help of one of the best map makers in the world, the NGS. Second, while developing this innovative map, these communities will begin to have a better picture of how a healthy population of salmon increases economic benefits for the region in a sustainable fashion, thus encouraging conservation at a local level.

As local economies improve, local communities have an economic incentive to protect the area and its resources as a geotourism destination, avoiding many of the negative impacts that plague many other tourist destinations and ensuring that local geotourism assets are protected for future generations of both visitors and residents.

The provisional title for the Salmon Map is “Salmon Country.” The final map would be produced based largely on input from the local communities. Community members, led by NGS staff, would determine the appropriate landmarks deserving of mention on the final map. Map features could include information on local communities/tribes on rivers, places to eat/fish for salmon, salmon-friendly vintners, interesting watersheds, etc.

The proposed project will provide funding for the first of three regions as part of NGS’s plan to implement the California MapGuide statewide. NGS intends to create Geotourism MapGuides for the entire coast of California using a phased approach. While NGS would like to create MapGuides for the Northern California Coastal Geotourism Region; Central California Geotourism Region; and Southern California Geotourism Region, the grant from the Ocean Protection Council would fund only the Northern California Coastal Region section of the California map.

### **MapGuide Description**

The Salmon Map will be a double-sided map-brochure (approximately 25” x 37”) that conveys geotourism information through map features and accompanying text blocks (see Exhibit 2 for examples). It is intended for wide distribution, preferably free of charge. It is not intended to be for profit.

### **MapGuide Printing and Distribution**

The Salmon Map will produce both a hard copy of the map and an online interactive version. The initial printing of the Salmon Map will be 100,000 copies. The OPC grant would fund only

the hard copy map, and only the initial printing.

## **Map Project Elements**

### **1. Paper Map – Hard Copy**

#### **Features**

- Road network with classifications, such as primary and secondary roads and roads of special historic or scenic interest
- Cities, towns, hamlets (graded by population)
- Hydrography (shorelines, rivers, streams, lakes, intermittent streams)
- Vegetation cover (forest cover, grasslands, wetlands)
- Protected areas (national parks, special protected zones, wetlands, biological reserves, etc.)
- Map notes, 5 to 50 words each
- A “destination dynamics” text block, 100-300 words; working title: “Salmon Country”  
Text will describe the distinctive characteristics of the locale, including threats to salmon, opportunities to protect them, and role of tourists and tourism. Optional subheads or separate text blocks might cover “Nature,” “Traditions,” “Watersheds,” “Salmon-Safe Wine,” “Salmon Fishing Tours,” or “Smoked Salmon Purveyors,” as appropriate.

### **2. Geotourism Stewardship Council**

In order to create a sustainable geotourism map, it is essential to have community support from the north coast. The Geotourism Stewardship Council for the north coast has not yet been established, but is envisioned as a regional body of stakeholders representing local and state governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, academia, and other community members. The Council will adopt the set of principles that was developed by NGS Center for Sustainable Destinations, known as the Geotourism Charter. The Charter provides guidance for implementation of a geotourism strategy beginning with the Salmon Map project. Past regional Geotourism Stewardship Councils have been effective in supporting and informing the creation of the MapGuides and continue to remain in operation.

A Geotourism Stewardship Council will:

- Collaborate with local tourism stakeholders on community outreach and identify potential points of interest for the map with a focus on salmon.
- Contact local residents and organizations to discuss the nature of geotourism and how to nominate the types of sites, attractions, or activities that are most appropriate for the map.

After the completion of the MapGuide, the Council may decide to remain in place as a permanent body. Applying the geotourism principles as a guiding framework for future activity the Council defines, and directs the next steps to foster wise, locally involved, participatory planned, sustainable tourism.

### **3. Public Outreach**

Throughout the creation of the Salmon Map, a public outreach campaign will be conducted to inform the citizens of California, as well as the international tourism market about the

geotourism activities available in the northern California coastal region and how the region is dependant on a healthy ecosystem. This will be conducted through print media, radio, and TV. Information such as oral histories, local legends, cultural sites, which are dependant on salmon will be collected through multi media (video/picture/sound/text) and used to inform and educate the local population about the geotourism assets of the region. This local public relation and educational program will utilize the excitement created around the NGS Geotourism MapGuide process to educate local residents about their tourism and, more specifically, salmon assets and collect valuable information about the country's history, culture, and environment.

### **MapGuide Schedule**

The anticipated completion date of the Salmon Map should be within one year of securing funding. The exact delivery schedule will depend on the project period, the availability of suitable source data, and other factors.

### **GRANTEE DESCRIPTION:**

Founded in 1888, the National Geographic Society is one of the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Its mission is to increase geographic knowledge while promoting conservation of the world's cultural, historical, and natural resources. NGS reflects the natural world through its five magazines, television programs, films, radio, books, videos, maps, interactive media and merchandise. National Geographic magazine, the Society's official journal, published in English and 27 local-language editions, is read by 40 million people each month in every country in the world. The National Geographic Channel reaches more than 230 million households in 153 countries.

### **PROJECT FINANCING:**

Ocean Protection Council	\$87,500
Bureau of Land Management (California Coastal National Monument)	\$20,000
California Travel and Tourism Commission	\$40,000
In kind funding	<u>\$27,500</u>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>

Staff anticipates using \$87,500 in funds from the Environmental License Plate Fund appropriated to the Coastal Conservancy for Ocean Protection Purposes. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21190.5, these funds may be expended upon appropriation by the Legislature pursuant to the California Ocean Protection Act.

The Salmon Map project has received commitments from a number of current supporters for its 2008/2009 budget. If received in full, these commitments would cover the 2008/2009 budget.

### **CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT:**

Section 35510(b) of the Public Resources Code establishes the principle that state decisions affecting coastal waters and the ocean environment should be designed and implemented to conserve the health and diversity of ocean life and ecosystems and allow and encourage those

activities and uses that are sustainable. This section also sets the goal of improving monitoring and data gathering and advancing scientific understanding, to continually improve efforts to protect, conserve, restore and manage coastal waters and ocean ecosystems.

Pursuant to section 35650, ocean protection trust funds may be used for grants to non-profit entities for projects or activities that further these public purposes. Specifically, the proposed project will help to protect salmon and other valuable coastal resources by increasing awareness about endangered populations of salmon while creating a niche market that depends on a healthy and thriving salmon population. This action would be consistent with Public Resources Code Section 35650 (i)(c)(ii). Such types of tourism will help to increase economic opportunities through the marketing of sustainable tourism choices to foreign and domestic tourists, increasing local incomes, building local knowledge and pride, and producing economic incentives for the conservation and preservation of salmon and other geotourism assets. Additionally, the map will create community-based mechanisms to promote long-term stewardship and collaboration with fishery participants to develop strategies that increase environmental and economic sustainability.

**CONSISTENCY WITH OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL'S FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The geotourism map project is consistent with Section II, Goal F, Education and Outreach, Objective 1 of the OPC Five-year Strategic Plan (June 2006) which highlights the importance of raising public awareness of ocean and coastal issues and encouraging individual stewardship as “a strong link exists between the public’s understanding of the natural environment and their willingness to protect and preserve natural resources.”

**CONSISTENCY WITH OPC'S FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR FY 2007/2008:**

Section 5 of the OPC's FY2007/2008 Funding Priorities calls for a statewide focus on salmon. The priorities seek innovative projects that will contribute to improved management and understanding of river ecosystems in California with particular emphasis on the Klamath Basin and a better understanding of the economics of fisheries in key rivers.

**CONSISTENCY WITH OPC'S FUNDING GUIDELINES:**

The proposed project is consistent with the OPC's Project Funding Guidelines adopted June 14, 2007, in the following respects:

**• Directly relate to the ocean and coast**

The project strengthens public awareness of the need for a health land-sea connection and local awareness of natural resources systems that foster a sustainable economy.

**• Have demonstrable support from the public**

The project has demonstrable support from the public as witnessed by the letters of support, Exhibit 3.

**• Greater-than-local interest**

The project serves to provide incentives for sustainable geotourism in the region that recognizes local natural resources and their value to the region.

The project also satisfies the following funding objectives:

- **Promote ocean and coastal awareness and stewardship**

By supporting the project, tourism will increase citizens' awareness about salmon and will encourage stewardship of salmon and the resources which salmon depend on for survival.

- **Increase healthy ocean and coastal wildlife populations and communities**

Support of this project will increase populations of salmon through sustainable tourism dependant on salmon. By supporting key business whose survival depends on a healthy population of salmon, the OPC can positively impact the region by supporting businesses that protect and conserve salmon populations.

### **Additional Criteria**

**Resolution of more than one issue:** Through support of the Salmon Map project the OPC can help create economic opportunities for businesses which aim to protect and conserve salmon populations throughout the state. The OPC will be helping to educate people about the important role salmon play in our lives as well as creating economic opportunities for salmon businesses.

**Leverage:** The OPC will be able to leverage funds from the Bureau of Land Management as well as other agencies that would be interested in supporting such a project.

**Timeliness or Urgency:** In order for the project to begin on time and meet deadlines, approval at the February 29, 2008 OPC meeting is critical to project development this summer.

**Innovation:** The project is very innovative in that the OPC will be supporting both businesses and protecting the environment. This project helps create sustainable businesses which are dependant on a healthy and robust environment.

**Coordination:** This project will create partnerships with one of the most respected journals in the world, National Geographic. Through this partnership, the OCP will be working with a variety of state and local officials as well as members of the public.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA**

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15306 because the project involves only data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval by the Council.