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BLM, COASTWALK ENTER COASTAL MONUMENT PARTNERSHIP

The U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Coastwalk, a non-profit coastal access and conservation organization, have signed a partnership agreement focusing on the preservation and stewardship of the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) and the California Coastal Trail (CCT).

Building public awareness of coastal and ocean resources and responsible public use are key elements.

Through a memorandum of understanding, Coastwalk and the BLM have agreed to coordinate in long-term protection and public education efforts regarding the rocks and islands of the CCNM. In addition, Coastwalk will participate in developing CCNM community gateways where the public can learn more about the CCNM and about the CCT.

“We are thrilled to be a partner in the California Coastal National Monument,” said Coastwalk President Fran Gibson. “We look forward to working with all monument partners to champion the California coast.”

Rick Hanks, the BLM’s California Coastal National Monument manager, said Coastwalk members will help provide expertise about ways to inform the public about the CCNM.

“Hikers on the California Coastal Trail will have wonderful vantage points where they can learn why the monument’s rocks and islands are such an integral and important component of coastal ecosystems,” he said.

The CCNM includes the rocks, small islands and exposed reefs along the length of the California coast, from the mean high tide line out 12 nautical miles. Part of the BLM’s National Landscape Conservation System, it provides important habitat for plants, seabirds and marine mammals. The rocks and islands are important in the heritage for many native people, and have historic significance in many areas.

The BLM, working collaboratively with a wide range of partners, is responsible for protecting the more than 20,000 rocks and islands and the habitat they provide.

The California Coastal Trail (CCT), mandated in 1972 by Proposition 20, is one of the great trails in the nation. Roughly half the 1,200-mile trail, which runs along the entire coastline, is complete.

Coastwalk, a grassroots organization founded in 1983, promotes responsible public access to the California coast, in part through promotion and stewardship of the CCT.

“We work for both coastal protection and public access,” Gibson said. “Our vision is for a well-stewarded California coast, highly prized as an irreplaceable commons, open to all.”