



*Our mission is to protect and preserve Upper Newport Bay*

June 8, 2016

Rotary District 5320  
P.O. Box 3970  
Orange, CA 92857-0970

To Whom It May Concern:

California State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways, awarded the Newport Bay Conservancy a grant to expand their kayak program. The Conservancy has a wonderful partnership with the Newport Aquatic Center (NAC) to rent kayaks from their fleet for their Saturday and Sunday morning guided kayak tours of the Upper Newport Bay. Each year, this tour educates over 1,000 people about the rich history and ecological significance of the Bay and its wildlife. Separately, the Newport-Irvine Rotary Club also rents NAC kayaks to conduct monthly trash cleanups. Each year, roughly 150 Rotaracts and Interact Club members remove in excess of 3,000 pounds of trash and debris coming into the Bay through the 152 square miles of Newport Bay Watershed.

With approximately 9,000 boats, Newport Harbor is one of the largest recreational boat harbors on the U.S. west coast. It's a popular destination for all boating activities including kayaking. Newport Beach also sees on average 6.9 million tourists flock to its City. Especially in the summer with tourists wanting to experience the Bay, we routinely run out of kayaks for everyone, whether it is for the guided tours, Rotary cleanups or for the NAC's individual rentals or members! Couple that with the number of boats and tourists, and it becomes extremely important to provide instruction on how to be safe out on the water. The Upper Newport Bay becomes a great place to introduce people to the water and kayaking, in order for them to develop the skills necessary to venture on the water by themselves.

With the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) mission for providing safe and convenient public access to California's Waterways, it was a great fit for the Conservancy to apply to DBW's grant program and we did just that. Receiving this grant will allow the Conservancy to purchase 20 new kayaks and accessories for the guided kayak tours and use them in partnership with the Newport-Irvine Rotary Club for their monthly cleanups.

Unfortunately, the grant does not provide the funds for the lockable storage needed for the kayaks and accessories or any interpretive materials having to do with safety and the importance of keeping trash out of our waterways. We urge you to support the construction of storage and signage needed to help both programs flourish.

Sincerely,

Heather Cieslak, MPA  
Operations Director  
Newport Bay Conservancy