

Media Release

City of Seaside

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nature-Based Play Area Coming to Seaside Will Make Outdoor Learning Fun

Robert's Lake nature-based play area will promote natural play and environmental stewardship

Seaside, CA July 17, 2017 – The City of Seaside, in partnership with Sustainable Seaside, has been selected as a Building Better Communities grant recipient from the American Water Charitable Foundation and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The City of Seaside is one of three communities awarded this grant in 2017.

Community parks like Robert's Lake are vital in connecting children to nature. Nature-based play areas foster an appreciation for environmental stewardship, while providing opportunities for physical activity. In Seaside, community members will benefit by having a space dedicated to the education of urban water ecology for people of all ages, especially children. The project will include an outdoor classroom, fun nature-based play equipment and seating. Sustainable Seaside, together with the Seaside Recreation Department, will offer environmental education programming, especially about water.

“Successful communities invest in their parks,” said Craig Malin, Seaside City Manager. The grant funding will help the City of Seaside to leverage investment in its parks and programming, especially for youth and seniors.

Through the Building Better Communities grant program the City of Seaside and Sustainable Seaside will design and build an outdoor classroom, ensure the area is accessible, install nature-based play equipment and additional seating. In addition, a demonstration rain garden will be created. Students will come from the area, and bilingual outreach will be conducted. Volunteers from the community will have

opportunities to help create this park feature, together with volunteers from American Water. The outdoor classroom programs will be designed to educate people on issues like water conservation, water ecology, and water quality. Sustainable Seaside, along with their partners, is advising on course content and age-appropriate materials.

“NRPA believes every person should have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. That’s why we’re proud to present these communities with the Building Better Communities grant,” said Lori Robertson, NRPA director of conservation. “Ensuring children and families everywhere have the opportunity to engage in physical activity and explore the benefits of nature is essential to building healthier, stronger communities and creating the next generation of environmental stewards.”

“We are excited to give these three communities an opportunity to foster a greater sense of appreciation for the environment in a fun and engaging way,” said Laura Martin, External Affairs Manager, West Virginia American Water and President of the American Water Charitable Foundation. “The projects will not only benefit the children and families in these communities, but they will also encourage the continued viability of and appreciation for our nation's water resources. The Building Better Communities program supports American Water’s core values of community stewardship and environmental sustainability, and aligns with areas of importance to the company’s employees, including child welfare and education.”

For more information about the Building Better Communities program, visit <http://www.nrpa.org/buildingbettercommunities>.

The City of Seaside is a multi-cultural city of approximately 34,000 people on the Monterey peninsula. Seaside has over 20 parks, and was recently named a Tree City USA. Seaside is a vibrant, proudly diverse, energetic and safe community, with extraordinary natural beauty, quality of life and economic opportunities. For more information, visit: www.ci.seaside.ca.us.

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of nearly 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit www.nrpa.org. For digital access to NRPA’s flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.

The American Water Charitable Foundation was established in 2010 with a founding contribution from American Water, the American Water Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)3

nonprofit organization that provides a formal way to demonstrate the company's ongoing commitment to being a good neighbor, citizen, and contributor to the communities where American Water and its employees live, work and operate. The Foundation helps support American Water employee-identified nonprofit endeavors.

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