

[Community Corner](#)

It's Official. Crystal Cove Renovations Approved

The expanded renovation will increase public access to affordable overnight stays and offer education programs to under-served students.

By [Ashley Ludwig \(Patch Staff\)](#) - March 10, 2017 1:16 pm ET



NEWPORT BEACH, CA — It's official, for the Crystal Cove cottages. The California Coastal Commission today approved the coastal development permit for Crystal Cove State Park Historic District's final 17 cottages.

California State Parks and [Crystal Cove Alliance \(CCA\)](#) are joint applicants on the permit. The approval will increase public access to affordable overnight stays and offer education programs to under-served students.

For the past four years, CCA and California State Parks (CSP) have been working with the California Coastal Commission (CCC) on the permitting process for the final 17 un-restored cottages on the north beach area. These cottages represent the capstone project for CCA under its mission of Preservation, Education and Conservation. All 17 cottages are identified as part of the overnight rental program in the previously approved Preservation and Public Use Plan (PPUP). Once restored, this will add an additional 48,000 annual rental opportunities for these much-coveted, and affordable, beach-side rentals. This is a huge public access success story considering this was a private community for approximately 60 years.

“This approval marks a significant milestone for preservation of one of California’s most iconic and historic destinations,” said CCA Founder and Vice President Laura Davick. “CCA will now be able to re-estimate this project and begin planning and developing a campaign to raise the balance of funds needed to make this dream a reality and add an additional 47,815 rental opportunities for families every year.”

The California Coastal Commission has been a long-time dedicated partner on the project and has provided \$5 million in mitigation funding to assist with the Crystal Cove final phase rehabilitation project. The current CCA and California State Parks proposal allocates \$4 million toward the infrastructure and restoration project, and \$1 million toward a permanent education endowment. As part of this proposal, a Coastal Dynamics Education Program will be developed.

For the last 10 years, the CCA and CSP have been working in partnership with the University of California, Irvine to create innovative education programs and research projects.

The coastal engineering program is designed to help study the extraordinary stress that the California coastline is experiencing from a combination of sea level rise and human modification of physical and environmental systems. Crystal Cove State Park represents a natural laboratory for science and engineering, ideal for engaging under-served K-12 and college students.

CCA President and CEO Alix Hobbs added, “With the project approved and the mitigation funds secured, we now have the catalyst to create the new educational program focusing on coastal engineering. Students and park visitors will learn about our dynamic and changing coastline due to climate change and sea level rise and will experiment with innovative solutions. The program will provide an opportunity for students to stay overnight, just a few feet from the shoreline, to help deepen the understanding of coastal dynamics in ways that day trips cannot.”

The 17 un-restored cottages will yield a total of 22 affordable overnight rental units. Rental rates will range from \$35 per dorm bed to \$245 per night for the largest cottages that sleep up to 10 guests. One of the cottages, #20, will be dedicated as an “open bed” dorm lodge and will be the first of its kind at Crystal Cove. Other dorm- style lodges, also funded by Coastal Commission, provide a private locking bedroom with shared common areas. The “open bed” dorm will have 11 beds and will be available for up to 36 nights per year to be used by students. The balance of the year it will be made available on a first-come, first-serve basis, for \$35 dollars per bed, per night.

James Newland, Assistant District Superintendent for California State Parks’ Orange Coast District, and the project manager and historian for the Cottage Restoration project since 2003, remarked that “State Parks is very pleased to reach this important milestone for the long-awaited completion of this model project that balances high-quality historic preservation and unparalleled public access—clearly illustrating the Department’s dual mission of preserving California’s most significant cultural and natural resources while providing extraordinary recreational experiences for all Californians.”

“This project will offer a truly unique opportunity to engage students in an innovative outdoor classroom that captures the fundamental tension between human and natural systems,” said Travis Huxman, Director, Center for Environmental Biology at University of California, Irvine. “We envision a coupled research and education program that engages K-12, undergraduate and graduate students in measuring and analyzing coastal changes at Crystal Cove.”

California State Parks and Crystal Cove Alliance will work through the end of 2017 to complete estimates for construction. Restoration could begin as soon as 2018.

Crystal Cove Alliance Photo