

# California State Coastal Conservancy

## 2016 SUMMARY



### Message from the Executive Officer

2016 marked the State Coastal Conservancy's 40th year. It was a productive and positive year that gave us an opportunity to reflect on what we've delivered in four decades, and how much more work is left to be done.

In June, the voters of the nine Bay Area counties made history by passing Measure AA, the first ever regional parcel tax, with an overwhelming 70% approval rate. The Measure will generate \$500 million over the next 20 years to restore San Francisco Bay's wetlands, provide public access to the Bay and reduce flood risk. The passage of Measure AA in the San Francisco Bay Area will aid the Conservancy in planning and building both landscape-scale wetlands and subtidal habitats in the Bay and Bay Trail segments adjacent to restoration projects. The Conservancy is administering the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority with the Association of Bay Area Governments; the first grant round is planned for Fall of 2017.

In 2017, we are focused on understanding and addressing the challenges to coastal access that prevent all Californians from enjoying our natural resources. We have commissioned our own research to analyze coastal access patterns among Californians and will be collaborating with community advocates to ensure underserved communities have opportunities to explore the coast.

We will also be consulting with our partners throughout this year to help shape the next iteration of our Strategic Plan which will cover 2018-2022. This collaborative process will give us valuable insight into how we can work most effectively with our colleagues to achieve our shared goals of coastal access and conservation. The Strategic Plan guides our staff as they develop projects and programs, and gives the public a clear understanding of our direction of travel.

The new Administration in Washington presents us with the dual challenge of a President openly dismissive of climate change and dramatic cuts proposed to the federal agencies that fund many of our projects and partners, as well as environmental protection generally. We remain committed to preserving, protecting and restoring the California coast and will persist with the support of our State government, the Natural Resources Agency and California's residents.

- Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer

Since our founding in 1976, we have achieved:

- **2,400 projects** along the California coastline and in the San Francisco Bay.
- **390,000 acres** of coastal lands protected through acquisition of fee title and conservation easements.
- **33,000 acres** of habitat restored.
- **200** new coastal accessways.
- **210 miles** of new trails built.
- **\$1.3 billion** put to work for conservation projects, and far more leveraged from federal, local government, and private sources.
- Over **\$4 million distributed through nearly 150 Explore the Coast grants** throughout California to give young people and underserved communities unique coastal experiences.





# In 2016, the State Coastal Conservancy:

- Supported more than **120 projects** located in every county along California's coast and around San Francisco Bay.
- Awarded nearly **\$39 million** in grant funding.
- Of that, over **\$1.8 million** went towards funding **57 Explore the Coast** programs throughout the State.
- Leveraged more than **\$57 million** from federal and local governments and private organizations
- Supported the acquisition of over **9000** acres that will now be protected in perpetuity.
- Ran **4 Proposition 1 requests for proposals**: two general grant rounds, one round focused on anadromous fish habitat, and one round focused on urban greening in Los Angeles County.
- To date, 30 projects using nearly **\$13 million** in Proposition 1 funds have been authorized by the Conservancy board.

## North Coast

- Celebrated **President Obama's designation** of the Lost Coast Headlands and Lighthouse Ranch as portions of the **California National Coastal Monument**. The properties are now open to the public for hiking, beachcombing and recreation.
- Assisted the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) acquire a conservation easement over the **330 acre Gallagher Ranch** which will be maintained in agriculture, while also providing significant habitat and open space.
- Opened the second phase of **Fort Bragg's Noyo Headlands Coastal Trail**. The Conservancy has supported all phases of the project, from initial community planning work through land acquisition and trail construction.
- **Dedicated the 700 acre Kashia Coastal Preserve**. This project returns the Kashia to their ancestral lands on the coast after 150 years. The Kashia will use the land for traditional harvesting and gathering and ceremonies, and will manage the coastal forest. We also provided funding to Sonoma County Parks to design a **mile long public coastal trail** on the property west of Highway 1.

## San Francisco Bay

- Launched Phase 2 restoration of the **South Bay Salt Ponds** restoration project – a multi-agency effort to restore up to 15,000 acres of former salt ponds – as well as moved design and permitting forward at the **Bel Marin Keys Wetlands** in the North Bay. Both projects support the Bay Area's goal of **100,000 acres of restored tidal wetlands**.
- Removed **toxic wood pilings** from the Bay, removed **invasive cordgrass** from the Bay's mudflats. Replaced with **native plantings** and created **native oyster and eel grass habitats** along the shoreline to protect and enhance the **subtidal habitats** of San Francisco Bay.
- Funded planning and construction for the **Bay Trail**, the **Ridge Trail**, and the **San Francisco Bay Water Trail** as well as provided **\$325,000 for environmental education** programs around the Bay.
- Funded a conservation easement on over **7300 acres** of critical watershed lands in **Napa County**, enhanced fishery habitat in **Solano County**, and helped fund water sustainability practices on agricultural land in **Sonoma County**.

## South Coast

- Continued our pioneering work to advance **living shorelines** as a sustainable way to stabilize shorelines while providing habitat and public access and allowing natural shoreline processes to continue. After the first project in **Upper Newport Bay**, the Conservancy funded projects at **Cardiff and in San Diego Bay**, and also funded a workshop in **San Diego** on the subject.
- Initiated the **first urban greening grant round** of Prop 1 in LA County. This highly successful process netted many excellent applications, 12 of which were approved at staff level to bring to the Board **for over \$11.5 million** to be recommended.
- **Granted \$5m toward the purchase of 600 acres** of the sod farm adjacent to the **Ormond Beach wetlands** to restore the property back to tidal and dune habitat. Also, after years of owning property at Ormond Beach, moved forward to fund the preparation of a **restoration plan**.
- Administered **18 Explore the Coast projects** totaling nearly **\$600,000**.
- Authorized staff to enter into grants with local governments in order to facilitate installation of the **Coastal Trail Major Mile Markers**.

## Central Coast

- Provided **\$2.5 million** to the Big Sur Land Trust to acquire a 73 acre property at Carr Lake, which will become a "**central park**" for **Salinas**, while also reducing flood risk, enhancing natural habitat, and improving the water quality of Monterey Bay.
- Provided **\$2 million** towards acquisition of the **Rancho Cañada Golf Course in Carmel Valley** to help restore the floodplain, reduce overpumping of the river, increase wildlife connectivity, and give residents and visitors a new recreation space.
- We continued to support restoration of **Upper Devereux Slough**. Now after years of effort on acquisition and restoration planning, work is beginning to reclaim the historic wetlands.
- Our **restoration of the San Gregorio Creek watershed** benefits coho salmon and steelhead by keeping more flow in the creek during the summer while also supporting agricultural resiliency to drought and climate change.
- **Explore the Coast programs** included going out on the O'Neill Sea Odyssey boat, hiking and camping along the coast, and developing a stewardship program for Amah Mutsun tribal youth.

