



Annual Report 2017

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



The Coastal Conservancy maintained momentum on its major projects in 2017, while advancing on environmental equity and justice.

We began the year with a statewide telephone survey of Californian adults to better understand their attitudes towards the coast and the barriers that prevented them from getting there as often as they would like. We found that across the economic, ethnic and geographic spectrum, Californians feel a personal connection to our coast and wish they could visit more often. Over 94% of respondents agreed that people of all backgrounds are welcome at the California coast showing that it truly is a place for all of us.

The survey also told us that lack of time, money and transportation were the main factors keeping people from the coast. As we develop our grant programs, outreach activities and lower-cost overnight accommodation plan, this data will help ensure that our agency is considering the needs of all Californians.

The survey data were also instrumental in developing the Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, which was completed late in the year following several rounds of stakeholder and public outreach. The Strategic Plan will guide our grant-making and staff efforts in the next five years. In addition to advancing protection, restoration and public access to coastal lands, this plan incorporates goals for climate change and environmental justice.

2017 marked the fourth year of our flagship Explore the Coast grant program, which funds coastal trips and environmental education for underserved populations. This year we awarded a total of nearly \$600,000 to 18 programs across the state. Through these grants, approximately 20,000 Californians will get to experience our coast, often for the first time.

Our Bay Area Conservancy staff dedicated considerable effort to establishing the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority's first grant program, following the 2016 passage of Measure AA. Thanks to their tireless work, the first round of funding for these critical restoration projects will be awarded in the Spring of 2018.

We face 2018 with a clearer view of the challenges the Federal Administration present to our work. We are, however, buoyed by California's steadfast commitment to preserving our natural resources.

- Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer

2017 IN NUMBERS

- Number of projects funded: 100
- Total funding authorized: >\$35 million
- Acres we helped to conserve: >25,000
- Proposition 1 projects authorized: 31
- Total Proposition 1 funding authorized: \$21.5 million
- Number of Proposition 1 projects in economically disadvantaged communities: 22



A Year in Accomplishments

NORTH COAST

- Acquired a conservation easement over the Stewarts Point property on the Sonoma Coast, forever protecting the redwood forests and grasslands as a working landscape, and providing for a new one mile section of the California Coastal Trail.
- Celebrated the opening of the new 3-mile Arcata to Bracut segment of the Humboldt Bay Trail and Coastal Trail.
- Awarded a \$1,000,000 grant to The Nature Conservancy to purchase of a conservation easement over the 23,000-acre South Fork subwatershed of the Ten Mile River Watershed in Mendocino County.
- Awarded \$200,000 to the Marin Resource Conservation District to develop and implement 10 carbon farming plans.
- Approved the Eel River Estuary and Centerville Slough Enhancement Project Environmental Impact Report, a critical step in advancing this ecosystem restoration project with our partner The Wildlands Conservancy.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY

- Helped open Mount Umunhum, one of the most prominent peaks in the Bay Area, to public access after decades of work and collaboration with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, who led the effort.
- Provided \$4 million to advance urban greening in the Bay Area through seven grants to cities, districts and nonprofits.
- Completed restoration of 150 acres of new seasonal and tidal wetlands and public access features at Dotson Family Marsh and opened to the public in April 2017.
- Authorized our first round of Marin Community Foundation partner grants, allocating \$750,000 to four projects advancing resilience along the Marin shoreline.
- Protected of 300 acres of watershed lands in Napa County that will result in closing a gap of over 5 miles in the Bay Area Ridge Trail.
- Designated seven San Francisco Bay Water Trail trailheads in the East Bay.
- Resurgent California Ridgway Rail populations indicate the success of our Invasive Spartina Project and baywide tidal wetland restoration.

CENTRAL COAST

- Provided \$1 million towards an innovative groundwater recharge project that partners agriculture, the local water agency and the Resource Conservation District for Santa Cruz County.
- Provided \$750,000 to the Land Conservancy for San Luis Obispo County to acquire a conservation easement on the 1779-acre ranch in northern San Luis Obispo County to protect habitat and municipal water supply, and preserve agriculture and open space.
- Supported the recovery of the Southern Sea Otter through the Be Otter Savvy public education program and continued recovery efforts at Elkhorn Slough.
- Advanced the completion of the Coastal Trail through Santa Barbara County with grants for the acquisition of the 21-acre Carpinteria Bluffs III property and completion of the Carpinteria-Rincon Coastal Trail planning phase.

SOUTH COAST

- Published the draft EIS/EIR on the Ballona wetland restoration plan and held a public hearing on the proposed restoration.
- Completed the draft Santa Ana River Conservancy Program's Open Space Plan to help jurisdictions along the river corridor coalesce around a shared vision for the Santa Ana River Parkway.
- Initiated the installation of three more Coastal Trail Major Mile Markers in: Imperial Beach, Oceanside and Huntington Beach State Park.
- Provided technical assistance to the City of San Diego on climate adaptation strategies through our innovative Climate Ready Technical Assistance grant program.
- Broke ground on the restoration of the 1,000 acre San Elijo Lagoon.

