

Monterey County



The natural beauty of the Monterey County coastline is renowned worldwide and an enduring inspiration for writers, painters, and photographers. The coast is also home to a wide variety of celebrated wildlife, including California condors, seals, whales, and sea otters. Combined with an enviable climate, it's no wonder that the County's coast—from Big Sur to Monterey Bay—is among the top draws in the U.S. for tourists.

POPULATION: >425,000

LENGTH OF COASTLINE: 99 miles

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS: >100

CONSERVANCY FUNDING: >\$55 million

The Coastal Conservancy has helped protect some of the County's most scenic coastal lands and valuable wildlife habitats while also helping people get to and enjoy these areas. The Conservancy has helped with floodwater management along waterways and is actively working to remove the Carmel River's obsolete San Clemente Dam, a threat to the safety of downstream residents. Working with the farming community, the Conservancy has helped protect farmland and foster farming practices that are compatible with natural areas nearby.

The Conservancy intends to build on its more than 35 years of work with the people of Monterey County to:

- Open natural areas to the public and provide outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors
- Restore and improve the health of rivers, streams, and marshes
- Help sustain the agricultural economy and ensure its compatibility with the natural environment
- Meet the challenges posed by a rising sea and a changing climate.

Parks & Scenic Lands

The Coastal Conservancy has long worked with local communities and many private and government organizations to protect some of the County's most spectacular coastal lands. Almost all of these properties have been, or are slated to be, open for the public's use and enjoyment. Conservancy-assisted projects include:

- Acquisition of several properties along the coast of **Big Sur**, from Point Gorda to the Carmel River. Most notable are the almost 10,000-acre **Palo Corona Ranch**, which stretches for ten miles southward from the Carmel River; and the 1,200-acre **Bixby Ocean Ranch**, lying just south of the historic Bixby Bridge.
- Creation of the City of Monterey's **Monterey Bay Waterfront Park** east of the marina, which opened shoreline views and provided a site for part of the **Monterey Bay Coastal Recreational Trail**.
- Acquisition of more than 200 acres of **coastal sand dunes** between the City of Monterey and the Salinas River; home to many species of animals and plants that can survive in no other environment.
- Purchase of more than 600 shoreline lots in Sand City for addition to **Monterey State Beach**.
- Acquisition of the property that has become **Locke-Paddon Community Park** in Marina.

Trails & Recreation

The breathtaking scenery of the County's coastline entices people to experience the environment up close. The Conservancy has helped develop trails, stairways, and other visitor-serving amenities that help people get to the shore and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation.

- In **Big Sur**, a one-mile section of the **California Coastal Trail** allows visitors to reach a popular vista overlooking **McWay Falls**, facilities for visitors were constructed at **Pfeiffer Beach**, and significant improvements are being made to trails at **Garrapata State Park**.
- A trail and bridges at the mouth of the **Carmel River** allow hikers and bikers to reach **Carmel River State Beach** and **Point Lobos State Reserve** from Carmel-by-the-Sea.
- A 55-foot concrete stairway was constructed at **Carmel Municipal Beach**, and upcoming improvements include a bluff-top boardwalk and a new section of the **California Coastal Trail**.
- The **Carmel River Parkway**, which is beginning to take shape, will one day pass through Carmel Valley Village as it winds between Los Padres National Forest and the coast.
- The Conservancy helped the cities of Monterey and Pacific Grove develop their portions of the popular **Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail**, which runs between Pacific Grove and Castroville.
- Development of the **Monterey Hostel** expanded options for inexpensive lodging in Monterey.
- In **Monterey Harbor**, a boat launch accommodates wheelchair riders who want to board charter fishing and whale-watching boats.
- A barrier-free trail and boardwalk extending from **Kirby Park** near Moss Landing allows pedestrians and wheelchair riders an up-close view of wildlife habitats within the wetlands of **Elkhorn Slough**.



MONTEREY STATE BEACH



PALO CORONA RANCH VIEWED FROM ABOVE CARMEL



MONTEREY BAY WATERFRONT PARK



ELKHORN SLOUGH

Rivers, Creeks, & Wildlife

Since the mid-1980s the Conservancy has worked with the people of Monterey County to restore waterways and improve habitats for the vast numbers of wildlife that reside in and migrate through the County's natural lands. Several projects have been designed to improve water quality and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods and farmland from flooding and erosion.

- Community-led efforts to control erosion along **Garrapata Creek** in **Big Sur** have improved water quality and restored habitats for steelhead trout and other wildlife.
- **San Clemente Dam** on the **Carmel River** is being removed through a unique public-private partnership that will eliminate a significant flood risk and restore access for steelhead trout to 25 miles of high-quality spawning and rearing habitat.
- Restoration of a portion of **Carmel River Lagoon** improved water quality and expanded habitats for a variety of wildlife, and plans are underway for additional work to reduce flood risk and add to habitats.
- Restoration efforts greatly improved the water quality and biological health of Seaside's **Laguna Grande** and **Roberts Lake**, which are now at the center of two adjacent community parks near the coast.
- On the **Salinas River Lagoon**, pilot projects conducted with landowners have demonstrated ways to prevent soil erosion and flooding while improving water quality and wildlife habitat.
- The Conservancy has long worked in the neighboring watersheds of **Moro Coho Slough** and **Elkhorn Slough** to improve wildlife habitats and water quality while protecting farmland and reducing risks of flooding. The two watersheds contain some of the most ecologically valuable coastal habitats in California.
- Using funding from the California sea otter tax check-off fund, the Conservancy has helped UC-Santa Cruz investigate ways to improve the survival of **California sea otters**.
- The multi-county **Integrated Watershed Restoration Program** brings together government resource agencies and private organizations to improve fish passage, water quality, and wetland habitats using a non-regulatory, voluntary approach.



NOTLEY'S LANDING ON BIG SUR



CARMEL MUNICIPAL BEACH

Dereeno



SAN CLEMENTE DAM



MONTEREY HOSTEL

Robbin Gheestling



CALIFORNIA SEA OTTER IN ELKHORN SLOUGH

Teddy Lovet

Climate Change

The **Monterey Bay Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment** will help local communities identify and plan for potential impacts of future sea level rise. Some of the State's highest rates of shoreline erosion are already found around Monterey Bay and the expected rise in sea levels will only exacerbate the damage.

“For three decades the Coastal Conservancy has been a positive and productive presence in Monterey County. The Conservancy is populated with top-notch and dedicated staff and is among the most effective and innovative public agencies we’ve worked with. The coast of California, along with the people that use and enjoy it, have benefitted greatly from the Conservancy’s efforts.”

Mark Silberstein, Executive Director
Elkhorn Slough Foundation



CARMEL RIVER LAGOON

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

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